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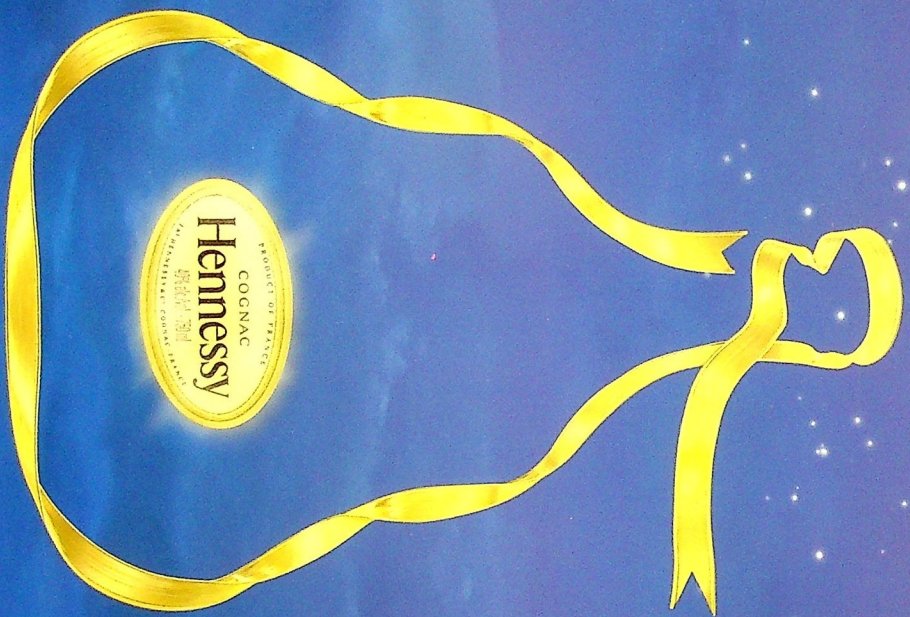
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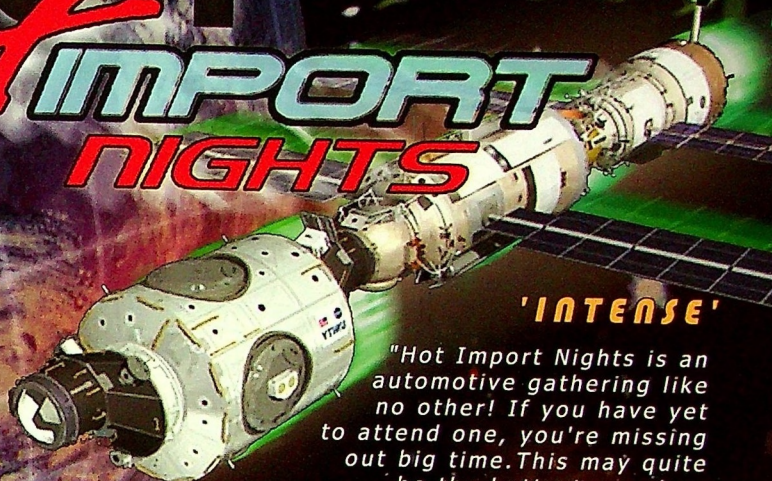


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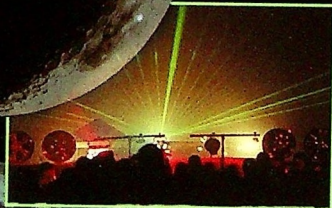
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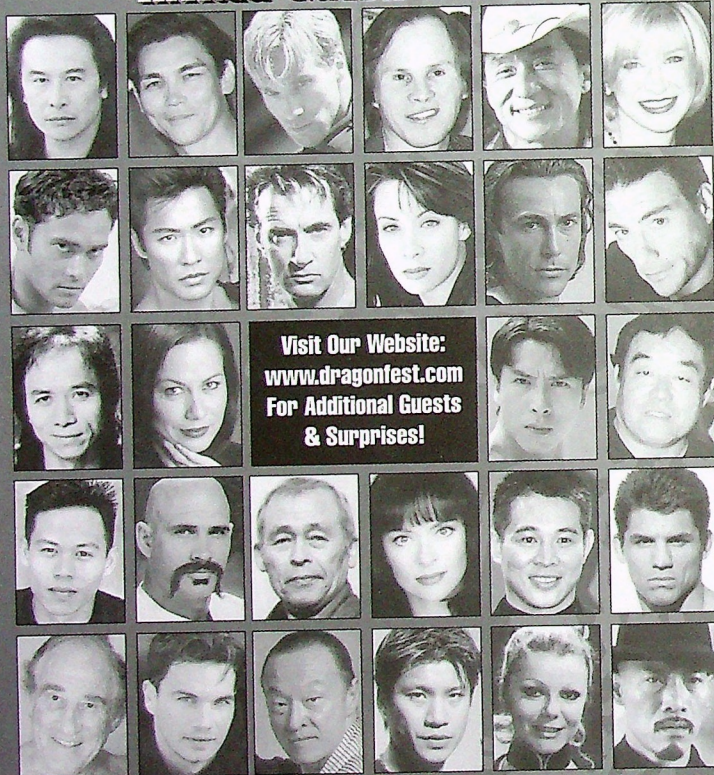
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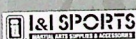
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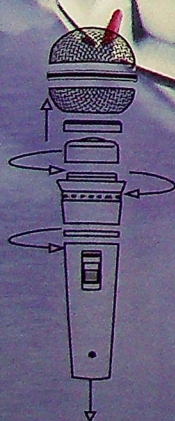
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editor's slant

Fall/Winter is here and the hot summer days are behind us. I'm one of those people who are actually affected by weather changes. With the oncoming seasonal change and the year 2000 coming to a close, I can't help but think of the changes I myself have gone through as Editor-in-Chief of YOLK as well as the changes the magazine has undergone since its inception roughly six and a half years ago. Ever since taking the post as Editor-in-Chief about two years ago, I have been challenged, crazed, frustrated, and ultimately blessed. Everyday is different here at YOLK; there are definitely ups and downs, but nothing beats the sheer exhilaration and satisfaction I get when I know that certain personalities are given due credit, respect, and recognition, and coverage in YOLK. Especially when a lot of these talented individuals are rarely featured extensively (or at all) in other publications.

When I travel with my one-man show *Three Lives* and people find out I am also Editor-in-Chief of YOLK, the reactions are usually the same: they can't believe that I'm lucky enough to spend my days and nights doing something I really enjoy and believe in. Yes, I am very fortunate to be part of this magazine. A lot of people have come and gone through YOLK's revolving doors and we here at YOLK would like to give thanks to all the individuals who have given their time, dedication, sweat, tears, and commitment in a special pictorial commemorative in the last few pages of this issue.

The Cover Feature for this issue belongs to Lauren Tom, one of the hardest working Asian American actors around. Lauren first burst onto the Hollywood scene with a hilarious role as the sassy waitress in *Cadillac Man* with Robin Williams. I remember meeting Lauren around that time and instinctively knew she'd be a success in Hollywood. Lauren's one of those souls who's genuinely sincere, down to earth, and strong. It's a pleasure to finally do a substantial story on Lauren.

As 2001 approaches, I am looking forward to the next stage for YOLK. At press time, all I can say is there is something new on the horizon, the next evolution of YOLK, if you will. Keep your eyes open. See you all very soon.

Peace,
Alex Luu
Editor-in-Chief

yolksters

editorial

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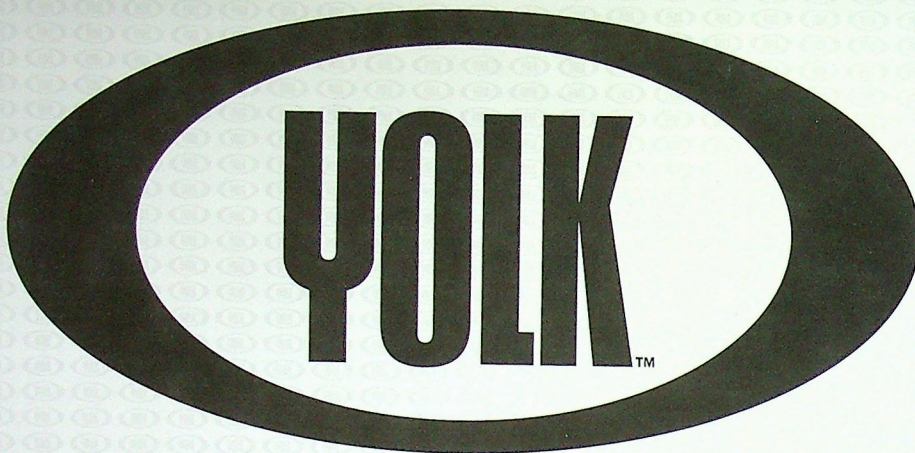
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Fall/Winter 2000



YB1: Vol.1/No.1
Fall 1994
Margaret Cho
PREMIERE ISSUE



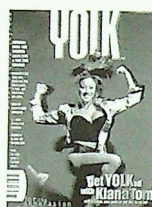
YB2: Vol.2/No.1
Spring 1995
Russell Wong



YB3: Vol.2/No.2
Summer 1995
Dean Cain



YB4: Vol.2/No.3
Fall 1995
Ming-Na Wen
SOLD OUT!



YB5: Vol.3/No.1
Fall 1996
Kiana Tom
SOLD OUT!



YB6: Vol.3/No.3
Winter 1996
Michelle Yeoh



YB7: Vol.4-No.1
Summer/Fall 1997
Jim Lee
SOLD OUT!



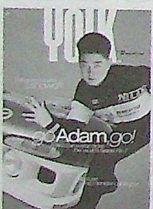
YB8: Vol.5/No.1
Spring 1998
Shannon Lee, Hapa Issue
SOLD OUT!



YB9: Vol.5/No.2
Summer 1998
Sung Hi Lee
SOLD OUT!



YB10: Vol.5/No.3
Fall 1998
Jet Li
LIMITED QUANTITIES!



YB11: Vol.5/No.4
Winter/Spring 1999
Adam Sawaatari
Racing Issue



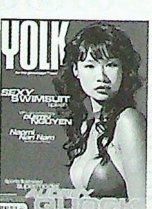
YB12: Vol.6/No.1
Spring/Summer 1999
Bai Ling



YB13: Vol.6/No.2
Fall/Winter 1999
Doug Chiang
Star Wars Issue



YB14: Vol.7/No.1
Winter/Spring 2000
Sammo Hung



YB15: Vol.7/No.2
Summer/Fall 2000
Audrey Quock
Swimsuit Issue

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visitingviolet

If you live in LA, chances are you've seen Visiting Violette jamming at well-known clubs such as The Whisky, Lunapark, and The Baked Potato. But what sets Visiting Violette apart from other unsigned bands is its focus and commitment to creating music with a social conscience. Although founding members Lee Takasugi and Glenn Suravech were fellow classmates in high school, both had their own self-revelations and journeys they would embark upon before joining forces as fellow band mates. Takasugi endured a traditional Asian American upbringing and was groomed to become a lawyer. After a one-year stint in law school, Takasugi found herself on the verge of a mental breakdown. "I dropped out; I absolutely hated it." It was only when Takasugi followed her heart and went to France that her calling as a singer/performer was given room to breathe and have a life of its own. While in France, Takasugi sang professionally for the pop band Denys Grey from 1987-89. Meanwhile, back in L.A., Suravech was honing his self-taught skills as a guitarist in several bands. "At that time, I didn't know any other Asian Americans who were playing music; a lot of times I felt like I was the only one," Suravech remembers.

When Takasugi and Suravech saw each other again at a college party, both instinctively knew there was a reason for their reunited

paths. Of the forming of Visiting Violette, Takasugi reflects, "It all happened very naturally. We were at Glenn's apartment talking about doing something musically and he just took out his guitar and started playing and singing. He wasn't shy at all." This impromptu jam session progressed into more solid meet-

experience with a tinge of the political, specifically from the point of view of an Asian American woman. Sample lyrics from a song titled Real, "I'm not amenable sometimes/I'm not a bottle of sunshine/I'm not your Goldilocks/Or a string of white pearls...I'm not a geisha in geta/But

I know I'll never neglect a/Cry for some tenderness/Or a hand filled with joy..."

Though Takasugi and Suravech front Visiting Violette, the band does have a rotating door of back-up musicians. These days, they are joined by Shinichiro Kawasaki on guitar. Currently in preparation to cut a full length CD to follow up their self-titled five song EP, Visiting Violette continues to play at countless clubs, though in their eight year history, the band can afford to be more selective of which clubs they want to perform in. Takasugi says, "Playing clubs in L.A. will age a band!" Regardless of the venue, Takasugi's hope is that everyone, no

matter what color, gender, or sexual orientation, can find something meaningful in Visiting Violette's songs and performances. "The best feeling you can get is when you're on stage and you and the audience are all on the same page; you don't feel stereotyped and everyone there feels that same vibe with the music." 🍷

—Alex Luu



(L-R): Shinichiro Kawasaki, Lee Takasugi, Glenn Suravech.

ings and sharing of lyrics and melodies. Visiting Violette defies easy categorization by effortlessly blending an eclectic mix of jazz, pop, and R&B. Takasugi's voice is also unique, husky one moment and lush the next. Suravech's guitar playing is hard-driving yet concise; each lick and strum resounds with equal power and grace. Visiting Violette's lyrics possess both the light and the darkness of the human



Fall/Winter 2000

Photography: Jaimee Itagaki
Stylist: Juliana Grossman
Hair & Makeup: Amy Harmon
Lee Takasugi's hot pink dress, black cross black dress by Mayren Viray
Glenn Suravech's burgundy shirt by YMLA, black pants by Banana Republic
Shinichiro Kawasaki's maroon shirt by Postiano, black pants by Banana Republic

bokyunchun

freshyolk

The first thing you notice about Bokyun Chun's physical appearance is her incredibly svelte figure and pearl white skin. Pictures and headshots don't do justice to her beauty. She is by far much more naturally beautiful in person than any photo she's been in. This rising Korean American talent has racked up recurring and co-star stints on series such as "Any Day Now," "Arli\$\$," and "Baywatch Nights." Her face will grace the big screen in the upcoming indie feature *Helium*. The first thing you notice about Bokyun Chun when she speaks is her candor, especially when talking about Hollywood. "I would warn all the actresses starting out that the casting couch is a very hot commodity in this town," Chun says. "When I was confronted with something like this, with superstars doing these nefarious deeds, I was so disappointed. I thought 'This is Hollywood? The system that turns out these beautiful pictures? This is fucking Hollywood? There's a lot of wolves out there who would exploit those in need.'"

Chun's brazen shoot-from-the-hip style is in direct contrast to her strict childhood upbringing. Before settling down with her family in the US at a very young age and going to boarding school on the East Coast, Chun went through a similarly regimented school system in Pusan, Korea. It wasn't until she was attending St. Johns College in

Santa Fe, New Mexico that Chun underwent a complete transformation with the help of a kindred spirit. "This individual really taught me to really express myself; to not be afraid," Chun says. "I took a chance and took an improvisation class. I had never been exposed that way

here I was on a soap. I suppose I should have been more grateful," Chun reflects. "But then again it's interesting how they wrote my character. I played this bastard daughter of an American soldier from Vietnam. My character was going to an English school and yet my

English was perfect on the show. It was perfect but in the writers' minds it was still not correct English. It was racist in a way. No matter if they make you a superhuman or sub-human, you're still not considered as human in their eyes."

The continuing obstacles of getting substantial parts as an Asian American actor prompted Chun to get involved with the Lodestone Theater Ensemble (see accompanying Feature story on page 20). "I'm hoping with my art and my theater company and my work that it really crashes the gates of racism," Chun stresses. "I'm not one to sit on my ass and wait for the phone to ring. I want to build opportunities not just for myself but also for

our people. I'm going to make damn sure I'm doing something about it, to build up a system that gives opportunities to people. I'm proud of my race. We're so misunderstood. We're just a mystery still. I'm tired of being a mystery. I'm tired of my people being a mystery." ☺

—Alex Luu

before. It was scary, vulnerable and powerful."

Chun's first big break was landing a part as a regular on the soap opera "Another World." Of that experience, Chun has mixed feelings and thoughts. "At the time I didn't really realize what a big deal it was. All my friends back then were these serious artists who had platinum records and selling paintings worth thousands of dollars and



Fall/Winter 2000

Photographer: Jaimee Itagaki
Hair & Make-up: Amy Hamon
Stylist: Dujana Bressman
White undershirt by GAP

asian pacific family center

A Way to Find Healing

By Newton Tak

Even Asian-American families have their share of conflicts and obstacles to face, some mild, others much more severe and consequential. And that's why organizations like Asian Pacific Family Center (APFC) exist.

Located in the San Gabriel Valley in Los Angeles, with its main office in Rosemead, APFC focuses on many different areas and groups. One project that operates under the APFC organization is the Chinese American Family Enrichment Network or CAFEN for short, deals with educating Chinese-American parents.

Teresa Jen Huang, who has worked with APFC for the past five years, has spent the latter half of her employment involved with CAFEN.

"I loved working with kids," Huang shares about her move from working with kids to educating parents, "but something was missing. And I realized what it was. Sometimes I would get a chance to talk with a parent, but most of the time, they would just throw them



Teresa Jen Huang

into my office, leave them and say 'fix them.' So when some funding came down for us to start a parent education program, I jumped at it." According to Huang, educating parents is important so that they have the proper tools and know-how to deal with conflicts and situations that their children may be facing.

"I think [parents] are the root—a lot of times they're the source—of

many of the problems that kids have," Huang explains, "and I'm not trying to put the blame on parents; it's not just the parents. Parents are often in denial of what their own kids might be doing outside the home, perpetuating their own 'not my kid' mentality. In this respect, another goal of CAFEN is to bring parents out of their denial, and let them realize what may be going on



Fall/Winter 2000

Photography by Diego Ordóñez

in their kids' lives, and how to deal with these issues. I think parents can play a large role in re-correcting and helping the kids to heal from unintentional negative experiences



Hon Tran

they had in their family. We would teach the parents to be more bi-cultural."

Another project under the APFC organization is Asian MASTERY, which is an acronym for Mentoring & Advocacy Support To Enhance Resiliency in Youth, headed by project director Dr. Chien-hung Cheng. MASTERY is run on a three-year grant by the federal gov-

ernment to mentor and educate at-risk youths, and is currently in its second year.

Hon Tran, a youth specialist for the MASTERY program, explains that MASTERY is a "substance abuse prevention funding. The federal government provided the funding to research whether mentoring at-risk youths will help reduce the abuse of substances."

All students involved in the MASTERY program are there on a voluntary basis. First, teachers and faculty members refer students to APFC's MASTERY mentoring team, whose referrals are based on research criteria of at-risk indicators. Then, these students are interviewed. And then the parents of those students who are interested are met with to obtain parental approval.

"However," Tran explains, "if we start working too much with the parents, they would tell us to back off, because our funding is not for that. Our study wants to show that working with just the students will make a difference."

In addition to mentoring and conducting research through the federal grant for Asian MASTERY, the program also hopes to advocate well-rounded individuals. Its three primary objectives are to improve school bonding and academic performance, improve family connection and family functioning, and to improve life management skills, such as study and work habits, bi-cultural competency and conflict

resolution.

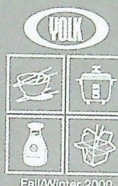
Because it is entirely a voluntary basis program, the Asian MASTERY can only be involved with students in so far as the students invite its mentors to be. Is it effective? According to Tran, "so far it's been pretty good. It's only a three year program, so we're gonna end June of next year. After that, the federal government may re-fund us, based on our performance and evaluation, and if we show that we're doing good work."

For both the sake of the community and for the well being of individuals, it is important that organizations like APFC exist. And more importantly, dedicated workers, like Huang and Tran, are necessary to allow such organizations and its program to exist.

And how dedicated can one get? "Well, sometimes I get a break; my husband and I go down to Mexico four times a year...to volunteer at an orphanage," she laughs. "But it's a part of my life! I don't see it as work."

With all this non-working, what does Huang get out of it? "Community, relationship, and healing," she concedes. "Yeah, I've never thought about it that way, but it does. Any profession, I think, where you yourself use your own personal life and experiences in your work, it's gotta be healing."

And it truly is the community as a whole that benefits from the healing, and from the perseverance of all those involved at APFC. ☸



Fall/Winter 2000

jackiechan adventures

The Animated TV Series

By Cynthia Quimpo Ignacio

This fall, international action star Jackie Chan takes the cartoon world by storm with his new animated series, *Jackie Chan Adventures*. In keeping with Jackie's live-action movies, this series combines physical comedy with extreme action and far-flung adventures. Championed by Sony Studios and the Warner Brothers Channel, it has been placed in the coveted Saturday morning time slot right after *Pokémon*. The 13 half-hour animated episodes, starring the voice talent of Sab Shimono, James Sie, and newcomer Stacie Chan, will include live-action "Ask Jackie" segments. Fans can log online at jackiechanadventures.com

and ask Jackie questions. The best questions will be selected for use on the air during the show's first season this fall.

The first episode establishes Jackie as an archeologist. He is quickly recruited by a secret government agency that is racing to recover 12 talismans before they fall into the hands of a crime ring called "The Dark Hand."

The fact that the series is animated definitely has its advantages—each episode shows Jackie doing unbelievable stunts made even more extreme because cartoon characters can't get hurt. Ironically enough, fantasy crossed reality with the villains. The scriptwriters originally named the crime ring "The White Hand," and later discovered that there REALLY IS a crime ring called "The White Hand." Because of unquantifiable

safety issues, Sony's legal department recommended using a "safer" name.

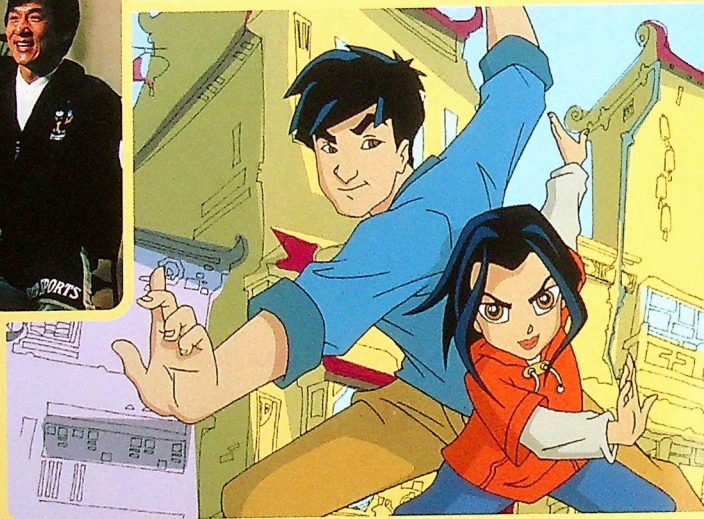
In an effort to recreate Chan's amazing fight choreography, the artistic crew kept a reference library replete with his live action films, and even took a special trip to watch *Shanghai Noon* the day it premiered.



direct homage to famed anime character, Lupin III.

In all, the series looks like it will be an instant hit—Chan has been especially impressed by the production, and extremely supportive of the crew. In return, the artistic crew presented him with a unique birthday gift—a sketchbook filled with original drawings.

By all accounts, *Jackie Chan*



Director Bryan Andrews, who has studied kung fu for several years, choreographed many of the most successful fight scenes in the animated series. Andrews was also influenced by Japanese anime whenever he directed a scene depicting ninja villains.

The art direction of *Jackie Chan Adventures* is very reminiscent of anime—this is most evident with the Eurasian character Valmont, who is Jackie's nemesis in the series. Thanks to the inspired colorists on the artistic crew, Valmont's character wears clothing that is a

Adventures has become a hot commodity in Hollywood—Burger King and Carl's Jr. are both in a bidding war to produce the series' toys, which will be hitting the stores in December, just in time for Christmas.

So tune in to the television series and watch Jackie kick some cartoon butt!

Jackie Chan Adventures airs on Saturdays mornings on Kids WB! Network. Check your TV listings for local times. ☺

KOREAN POP CONCERT 2000

Y-Generation Korean-Americans bobbed their heads and waved their arms to Korea's pop sensations Turbo, Baby V.O.X., J and G.O.D. Some even found spaces in between the aisles to groove along with the backup dancers on stage. It was Pop Concert 2000, hosted by *The Korea Times*.

The crowd was lively. The lights, awesome. And the music, loud. I was impressed by Baby V.O.X. Their performance, virtually flawless. And J demonstrated, live on stage, her vocal talents and sensual allure. But the audience award belongs to G.O.D. Just when I thought that the crowd couldn't get any louder, G.O.D.'s entrance onto the stage caused an uproar among the audience loud enough to make my ears pulse.

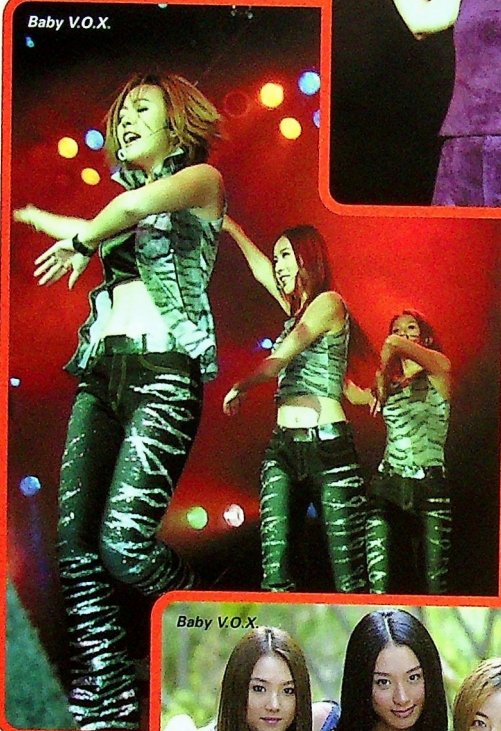
Pop Concert 2000 was the first Korean pop concert I'd ever attended. The energetic ambiance within the crowd, the spectacle of lights and the array of young talents on the stage are memorable.

Though the crowd favored G.O.D., my favorite pick for the evening's performances goes to J. Perhaps it's because of the sensuality in her style, or maybe it is her music and her vocal contributions to them. For whatever reason, I was intrigued by her talented display.

I may have a few years on the majority of the crowd in attendance, but I certainly enjoyed the opportunity to *Yolk* it out with them for Pop Concert 2000.

—Newton Tak

Baby V.O.X.



Baby V.O.X.



G.O.D.



Photos courtesy of The Korea Times/GC



annamaywong

By W Dachin Hsu

You know her by her distinctive jet black hairdo. You love her for her versatility. You admire her for her tenacity. Her beauty burned a spot in many hearts. Through her story you see the trail she blazed for all minority working in cinema today.

Harken back to the silent era, when racism and bigotry was the norm. Anna May Wong acted in 30 silent films, an unprecedented amount for an Asian American actor at that time. She made the transition to sound and starred in another 25 films. She was the very personification of Tinseltown China that fascinated the western audience. She was Fu Man Chu's daughter, Chinatown Charlie's sweetheart, princess, butterfly, harem dancer, dragon horse and slave.

She was born Wong Liu Tsong on January 3, 1905 in her father's Chinese hand laundry shop on Flower Street in Los Angeles' Chinatown. Translated into English the name means Yellow (Wong) Willows (Liu) Frosted (Tsong). Tsong's grandparents were among

the first wave of Chinese immigrants who came after the gold-rush years. From an early age she went to school for ten hours a day, six hours of American school and four hours of Chinese school. As a result she was able to speak Cantonese with an American accent. For a young girl in those days, Hollywood had a special appeal. The dream factory was everywhere. When she was nine years old, Tsong observed star Mae Murray shooting a scene in Chinatown. In her words, Tsong decided on the spot, "Yes, I would become a movie star too!"

Her big chance came when the film *The Red Lantern* needed Chinese extras as lantern bearers. A family friend, James Wang, who worked as a bit-part actor, took her to meet the assistant director. The assistant director immediately cast the tall beautiful 14-year-old as one of the lantern bearers. Though she had no screen credits, Tsong chose Anna May as her screen name, and kept her family name Wong. Thus Anna May Wong was born in 1919.

After small parts in *Dinty* and *Bits of Life*, May Wong had a starring role in the Technicolor film *The Toll Of The Sea*, in which director Chester M. Franklin went against the Hollywood norm of having white actors with taped eyes and fake tans playing Asians. Franklin cast real Asians and featured May Wong as Lotus Flower, a beautiful and wise young woman who rescued a Caucasian man who had fallen to the sea and was washed up on the shore of her Chinese village. Finally, May Wong had something substantial to do in a movie. The 17-year-old exuded sensuality and demonstrated wisdom, emotion, understanding and beauty far beyond her age.

In 1924, May Wong starred as the daughter of the evil sultan Sojin in Douglas Fairbanks' mega budgeted (\$2 million) *The Thief of Baghdad*. Although not a box-office success, *Bagdad* made headlines with the critics and May Wong captured Hollywood's as well as Fairbanks' attention. Hollywood



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Photo courtesy of UCLA Film Archives



came calling and the next few years found the 19-year-old rising star booked—a full time working actress. She appeared as Tiger Lily in *Peter Pan*; as a harem girl in play in *His Supreme Moment*; as Zira in *40th Door*; as Keok in *The Alaskan*; as Annabelle Wu in *Forty Winks*; as Nan Lo in *Fifth Avenue*. May Wong was the Asian girl du jour for Hollywood. If they needed a Chinese slave they called her, if they needed a Chinese spy, they called her. She was the quintessential femme fatale—foreign, exotic and cool.

Anna May did make an attempt to raise social consciousness by agreeing to appear in a film made by unknowns who were Chinese/American. Termed “race films” at the time, the movie was originally called *The Silk Bouquet*, and later changed to *The Dragon Horse*. Unfortunately the film was not a success.

Tired of stereotypical and lack-luster parts, May Wong, now 23-years-old with 25 films under her belt, took shelter in the more open-minded Europe. She achieved a greater extent of artistic freedom and respect overseas than in the US, making two German films titled

Song and Butterfly, respectively. Song was her first talkie, allowing her to finally speak words to match her timeless beauty. With her success in Europe, May Wong returned to her Los Angeles, hopeful that she will be treated like any hardworking actress with talent and ambition. By now, May Wong had a following and the studios were ready to capitalize on it. In *Daughter of the Dragon*, she played princess Ling Moy. Though the film was another racist product of Hollywood, May Wong poured everything into the part. She also had the best lines, “Ling Moy awaits you” and “I will be your son—daughter”. She had the best costumes—simmering skin-tight gold lamé outfits that revealed her braless torso, the perfectly shaped shoulders, the tiny waist, the Audrey Hepburn neck, the long arms. After *Daughter of the Dragon* came director Josef Von Sternberg’s classic Orson Welles/Marlene Dietrich film noir *Shanghai Express*.

By now Anna May Wong, the working actress, had formed her view of the industry she had worked so hard to be part of. She realized she was a talented actor, worthy of carrying a picture. In 1937 she made a mighty attempt to lobby for the

role of her life, the virtuous O-lan in *The Good Earth*. Instead of giving the part to May Wong, Austrian actress Luise Rainer was chosen. A supporting role was offered to May Wong, but she refused to appear in the film. This humiliating experience crushed May Wong, especially when Rainer went on to win the Best Actress Oscar for *The Good Earth*. After more than 30 films to her credit, May Wong realized she was still an outsider.

May Wong never married, had no children and died of Laennec’s Cirrhosis at the age of 56. She was buried alongside her mother in Rosedale Cemetery in Los Angeles. Her gravestone is carved only in Chinese. Though most of her parts were controlled and limited by white Hollywood, Anna May Wong nevertheless was the glamorous Hollywood siren with a career that spanned over 40 years, a feat still not rivaled by any other Asian American female actresses since.

You can still have her—her image, her beauty, her words, and her talent—on celluloid. Like a dream you can still have her. Anna May Wong’s struggle is still yours.



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Dong Kingman king of hollywood film design

By Cynthia Quimpo Ignacio

Asian Americans seeking a role model in film design need look no further. Certainly Doug Chiang, lead designer on *Phantom Menace*, is someone to admire, but "there is another," one whose artistic career spanned nearly 70 years.

Internationally renowned artist Dong Kingman, whose career encompassed much of film history, was recently featured at the

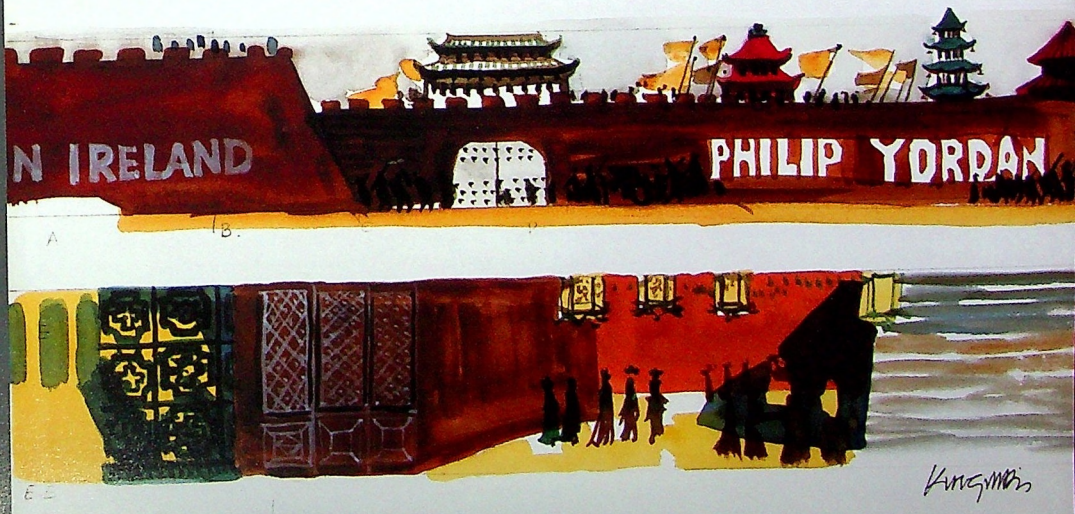
Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. The exhibit represents one of the Academy's major Asian American film-related collections.

Dong Kingman's most memorable contributions to film design include *Flower Drum Song* (1961), *55 Days at Peking* (1963), and *The World of Suzie Wong* (1960).

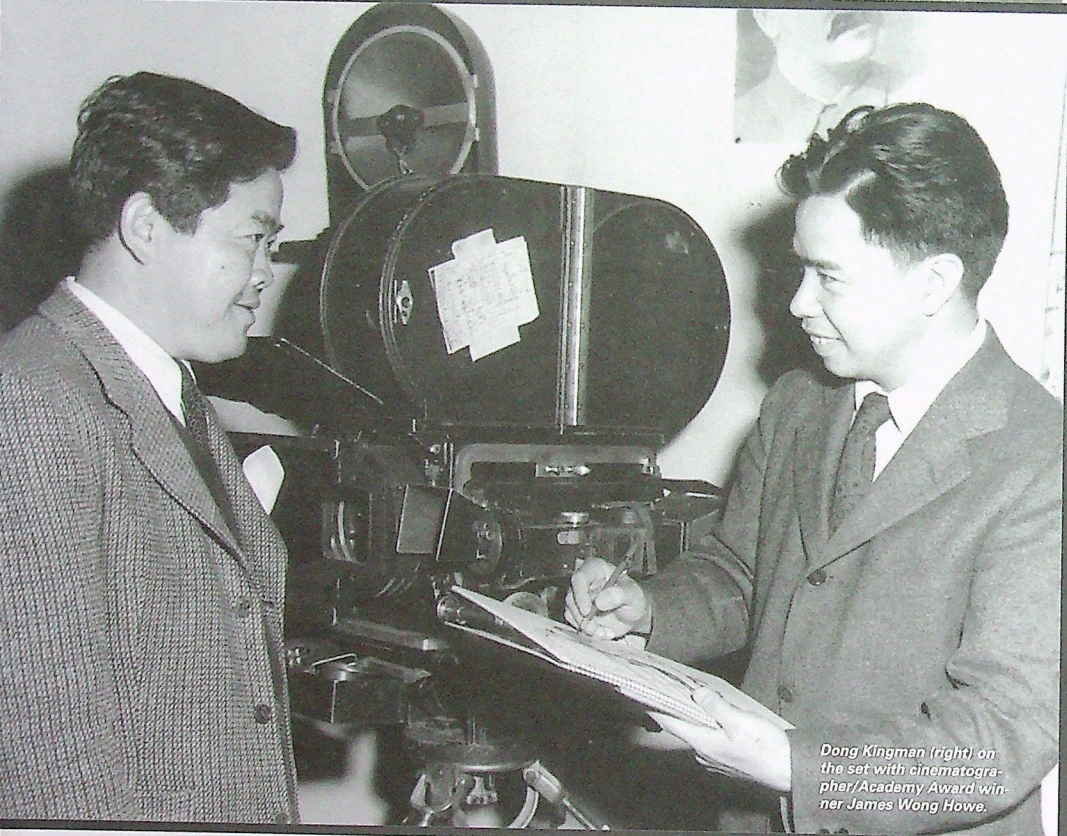
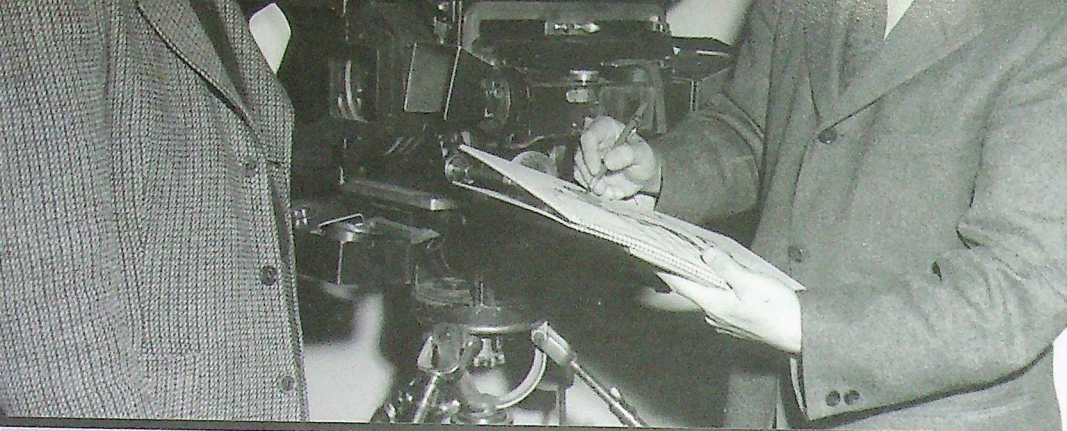
Kingman's watercolors were used to visualize the emotional tone of vari-

ous scenes, or as colorful and sometimes animated title designs. Some fine examples of such design can be seen in the films *Circus World* (1964), *King Rat* (1965), *The Sand Pebbles* (1966), *The Desperados* (1969), and *Lost Horizon* (1973).

Besides Kingman's astounding Hollywood work, the Academy has also included his personal watercol-



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Dong Kingman (right) on the set with cinematographer/Academy Award winner James Wong Howe.

ors, sketchbooks, ink drawings, and pencil sketches. Aside from his acclaimed production design, Kingman was also a master watercolorist and a founder of the California School of 'plein-air' painting. Prestigious magazines such as *Life*, *Time*, and the *Saturday Review* featured his work on their front covers. In addition, Kingman is privileged to be included in the country's

most prestigious museum collections, such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the New York Museum of Modern Art.

If all this isn't impressive enough, many books have been published of his artwork, such as "Portraits of Cities" and "The Watercolors of Dong Kingman." He has also garnered several notable awards during his long career,

among them being two Guggenheim Fellowships.

The Academy has done the Asian American community a great service by exhibiting this extraordinary man's work. The showcase truly demonstrates that in the history of American art and film, Asian Americans have made a significant and lasting contribution. 🏆



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Photo courtesy of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences Library

SAF05

whitemen can't... ...just can't

By Barbara Chen

I am in full cognizance of the wrath, befuddlement and perhaps even props I am about to incur via this column—an exploration of why (really, why?) non-Asian men no longer fit into to my realistic definition of attraction/date/relationship/partner.

I came across this subconscious fact after separate dinners with former colleagues. One is young, dashing and Caucasian. He and I were having dinner, discussing our new ventures and old corporate memories, when somewhat suddenly, Young Dashing leans back in our booth, saying, "So...relationships... Do you have a boyfriend?" Though Young Dashing proved to be all the things I'd expected of him—intelligent, charismatic, somewhat handsome—I went home and easily fell asleep, with zero palpitations or head change. All in all, it was a pleasant time, replete with good food and honestly, great company. So—why am I more apt to label it lukewarm and less to accept his ensuing invitations?

Second occasion: Glass of wine with a Chinese girlfriend. Yan Yee, we'll call her, is telling me all about her last relationship and emerging new ones, which all involve non-Asian men. We're chewing the fat, when her words stop me mid-swallow. "I don't know, for me, it's like, I can't...it's like dating my dad; I can only think of him as a brother." Yan Yee is talking about Asian men, and I'm prompted to voice my newfound (because, I'd never stopped to consider otherwise) realization that I, conversely, can't envision being non-platonic with a non-Asian, anymore.

Now, before you send in your "Exclusionary!" and "We're not in China/Korea/Japan anymore!" (as well as "Right on, sistah!" and

"Keepin' it real..." letters, allow me to finish.

I will be the first to acknowledge that I am last to embody an exemplary representation of the unacculturated Chinese American woman. (Who is?) Second-Gen though I be, I—unlike most of my counterparts—cannot understand, beyond recognizing that one is and one isn't, either Mandarin or Cantonese. Anyone's fault? Detriment? I don't think so. I may have benefited from Chinese school, had I been sent. And I fully doubt that it would matter in my relationships involving Japanese and Korean Americans, one Chinese guy in sixth grade and a resident Japanese alien de Peru. Nor would there be difference in any of my adolescent skirmishes with white beaus.

Truth be told, I am a recovered banana, a sucked-up twinkie—whatever other metaphorical description you know of for being yellow on the outside and white within. What brought this about, when just one year prior I shared a junior high grad limo with the future Torrance High homecoming king, in his athletic and hazel-eyed glory? Kimchee and doe-eyed infatuation, that's what. (Or was it mandoo?) Anyway, you see (quite possibly, smell) the picture: I encountered Asian peers, when I never before had any, aside from Dear Rani and Jane, my best Asian buds through the years, later becoming "Weird Nips." "Weird Nips" was the name given us by a cheerleader "friend," describing "the Orientals who only associate with other Orientals" she explained, which we inevitably became. It was comfortable, reaffirming and a near exhilarating concept, for me—meeting and making these new friends, with whom I already shared something. I didn't have to explain—I did-

n't have to hide!—Lee Kum Kee sauce anymore. I'm a product of my environment—and my environment has changed.

Since 1991, I have only dated Asian men, and, outside of work and college (and to some degree, even within), socialized primarily with Asian Americans. For some, this is quite natural. For me, it's become so—so much that now, I am slightly puzzled by the clear and present feeling that I can't meaningfully date a non-Asian, in spite of the positive and even admirable attributes of possible suitors. (There was one occasion in college, when I'd gone out approximately twice with a white guy, who insisted on calling me by my Chinese name, after he'd addressed me as "Babe" in front of all his Asian and non-Asian friends. My Aphor doesn't even call me by my Chinese name.)

Yan Yee has a racially based version of the Oedipus complex, oft discussed, challenged and promoted in various forums. One of them could be summed up as "Ew, it's like incest! Whatever. But me? I consider myself open-minded, one who values what's beneath the skin more than its hue. Still, I can't picture an intimate, even fleeting, nevermind long-term involvement...is it the simple 'as-you-grow-older-you-search-for-your-roots' routine? Or the ramen/dim sum/kalbi [similar = harmonious] factor? Am I just hungry?

If you feel the same, or absolutely different, do write me at editor@yolk.com We're changing covers but I'll surely be the same ole SAF you've come to know and enjoy, or not. (In which case, hello?! Write in! Voice your dissent.) We are the GenerAsian Next, and I've been waiting to hear from you... ☺



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SAM05 doessingleness= loserness?

By Spencer Lee

This past Labor Day weekend, I attended the wedding of two college friends, the groom being from the class two years ahead of me and the bride from one class below me. Needless to say, the weekend was fun. Among the attendees were a classmate I hadn't seen in about three years, various older sister types who spent most of the weekend pinching my cheeks and wondering why I was still single, and older brother types who were predominantly concerned with my consumption of alcohol.

As predicted, weddings are often fertile grounds for editorial content for a column like this, mainly because they celebrate the success of a relationship in the commitment of eternal unity, and this wedding was no exception. I was surrounded by both married and single friends, the older single friends all being males. To no surprise, the conversations surrounding us single men were about when we would find someone we would marry and why we weren't dating. Singleness is, at a distance, often considered a social shortcoming. While we would never accuse a friend straight to their face that they're a loser because they're not dating anyone, we all know that stigma persists in the recesses of our minds and only grows with age. But this weekend, I found a true study in contrasts of "single" males.

One of the bridesmaids, a friend from the class below me (let's call her Beth, for the sake of anonymity), had dated a classmate of mine (let's call him Jake) for about 7 years. Through the course of time, Beth had followed Jake to North Carolina for medical school and then to Southern California for residency. Shortly before Beth's

graduation from medical school, they became engaged. She subsequently drove across the country with her mother to join Jake for residency and, the day her mother left, he broke up with her. Now, for the sake of being fair to Jake (who I have always called a friend though I have not communicated with him since graduation), I do not know his side of the story. Though I have only heard Beth's side of the story, I cannot help but share some element of the injustice she feels.

So Beth, having just been dumped by Jake, who promptly left to stay at a friend's that evening, was stranded in a city where she knew no one. Without any phone numbers, fortunately, she was able to somehow procure the number of the bride, who, residing in San Diego, made the long drive to keep her company that evening after finding out what happened. Shortly thereafter, while making her rounds at the hospital, Beth ran into a woman who found out her history with Jake and stated, "You're much prettier than [Joan]." To add insult to injury, Jake, when he had run into Beth some time later, apparently told her, "Don't try make me feel guilty."

On the other hand was my friend, I'll call him Greg, who had just broken up with a girl he had been dating for over a year and a half. This relationship, according to him, was one of the best he had ever been in and he quite enjoyed the company of his girlfriend. However, she had begun talking about the "M" word and he, not being ready to go there, told her he was not ready to give her what she wanted and ended their relationship.

So here I was, standing

between two diametrically opposed situations. One guy who could not be single until it was too late (in fact, he may never have been single at all) and another guy who refused to keep himself in a relationship as soon as he realized he couldn't meet the expectations of his partner. Now I may be stating the obvious here, but I think it's clear that Greg, in his singlehood, is cloaked in (at the expense of sounding melodramatic) nobility while Jake, in his possible polygamy, is cloaked in mediocrity. So does singleness denote loserness?

I (being the single male), argue that singleness clearly does not imply loserness. Instead, as Greg demonstrates, it often implies the ability to do the right thing. Sure some single guys stay single because they don't want to commit to one woman, but a great number of men are NOT single yet find little problem exploring extracurricular activities with other women or stay in mediocre relationships of which they're too lazy or lack the guts to get out.

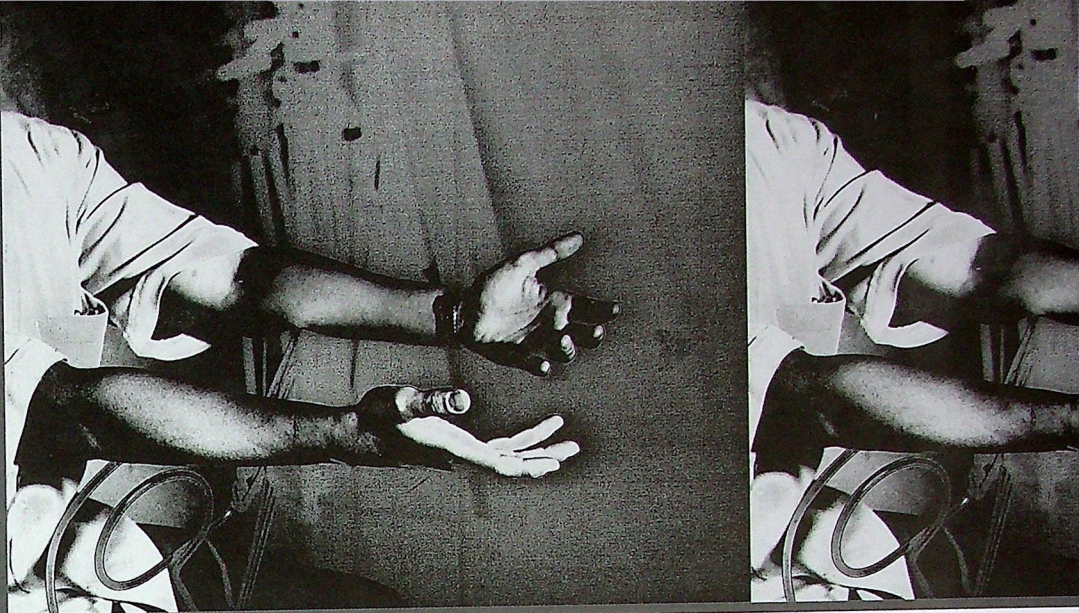
Ladies, check out the single males around you. Take the time to meet and get to know them. While they might not look like knights in shining armor from the get go, you just might do the right thing yourselves and find a man full of character. And for all you women who haven't had the long-term luck with your runway model boyfriends, that ain't too bad.

Write to Spencer at editor@yolk.com if you have any stories of singleness, or if you've just dumped your girl and feel that she just may be the perfect catch for him. ☺

singleasianmale



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Lodestone

The Evolution of a Theater Company

By Newton Tak

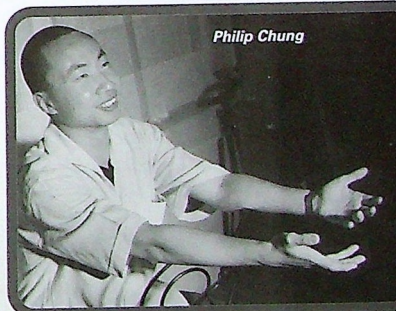
In the Academy Award winning film *Shakespeare in Love*, a band of talented performers led by Ben Affleck march into a theater house and announce their arrival. They are a theater company without a theater to call home, and yet somehow manage to put together a performance not only worthy enough for the Oscars, but for the Queen herself.

Today, there are several, if not many, theater troupes that operate without a theater to call home. But one in particular seeks to accommodate a band of Asian American actors and actresses. And this particular troupe calls themselves the Lodestone Theatre Ensemble. As everything else, Lodestone has its own unique beginning, one with the

hopes and dreams of one young man.

The history of Lodestone is that it wasn't always called that. In fact, the theater company didn't even begin as a troupe of Asian American performers; it was originally a Korean American theater group that accommodated predominantly Korean American actors.

Soon-Tek Oh, who founded Lodestone's parent company and predecessor, Society of Heritage Performers, grew up during the tail end of the Second World War and the Korean War. So what was available to Oh was very minimal; the film houses showed very old run down and overused films. It was in these film houses, where much of the film came through the U.S.



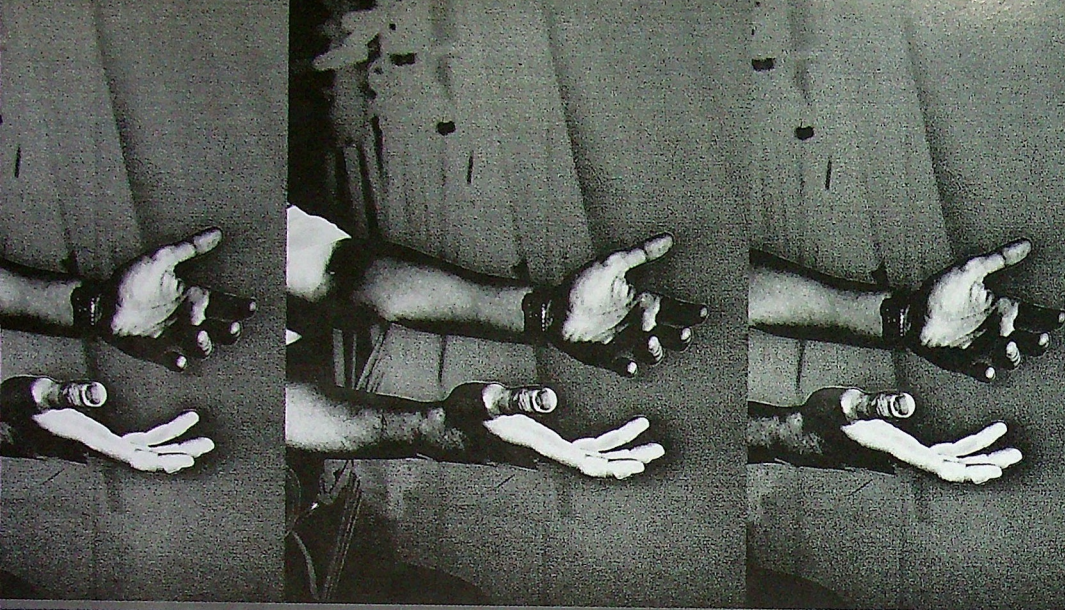
Philip Chung

Army and some from Japan, where Oh was exposed to the film world. In 1959, Oh made up his mind, packed up his bags and came to the United States to study motion pictures at UCLA. Once there, Oh's advisor and acting instructor at the university, Dr. Henry Goodman, at the university, suggested that he



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Photography by Diego Ordóñez



attend a professional acting school. "And I didn't know that there was a professional acting school," Oh admits, "because I came from Korea."

Taking Dr. Goodman's advice, the young freshman interrupted his undergraduate studies at UCLA to do a couple of years at The Neighborhood Playhouse School of Theater, in New York, the very same workshop / acting school where names like Gregory Peck, Paul Newman, Joanne Woodward and Steve McQueen honed their skills. After investing two years in New York, Oh returned to UCLA, finished his undergraduate degree in motion pictures and pursued his M.F.A. in theater arts, for which he also attended UCLA.

Around 1977, Soon went to see a Korean play for the first time, at the Wilshire Ebert Theater. He noticed that only middle-aged people made up most, if not the entirety, of the audience. "I was saying to myself, what happened to the younger generation?"

Oh thought about how he might be able to supply the community experience, and came up with an organization he formed in 1978, called Korean-American Theater Ensemble. This group received its support from the city as well as the

*"America
needs to see,
and the world
needs to get a
fuller
perspective of
what it is to
be Asian-
American."*

federal government and put together bilingual productions. However, this type of theater was way ahead of its time and the audience wasn't ready.

Shortly after the 1994 LA riots, Oh renamed the Korean-American Theater Ensemble to Society of Heritage Performers, in the hopes of promoting multi-cultural relations. It was under the Society of Heritage that Oh put up productions in which the cast was multi-ethnic rather than solely Korean American.

"If you're a Caucasian actor,

then there are quite a bit of established regional theaters throughout America," Oh says. "So after you finish school, and if you are fortunate enough to work at the regional theater to develop your techniques, still you can survive as an artist. There are no such place or opportunities for Asian American actors."

Another obstacle Oh sees is the lack of lateral movements or up movements for Asian-Americans. "Everybody could say I did a decent job in some project or film, and then I would expect to get an equivalent role or better role afterwards. But for Asian American actors, that is rarely, if ever, true. You have to adapt to this down side. There comes the value of the theater. If you can support yourself, in the meantime, and do a lot of theater work with your colleagues, then you can keep your sanity, develop yourself into a better artist. I urge younger actors to orient themselves to the theater. If not Lodestone, then something else. For their sanity and to develop their artistic skills."

Although Oh had started Society of Heritage Performers, Lodestone Theatre Ensemble came about as a kind of an offshoot of Society of Heritage. It was the result of four members, Philip W. Chung, Chil Kong, Tim Lounibos and



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Bokyun Chun, taking Society of Heritage to a new level.

At the time, Society of Heritage was largely in the hands of Oh, Lounibos and Chung. In November of '96, when both Lounibos and Chung had to pull out, or, as Lounibos puts it, "go on hiatus," Society of Heritage disbanded. This left Society of Heritage without a society. Oh went on to work on other projects, and Society of Heritage became an organization whose existence was very much de-facto. While working on the play *Woman Warrior*, based on the novel by Maxine Hong Kingston, Oh met Chil Kong, and took him under his wings. Lounibos speculates that Oh immediately saw that, "Oh, Philip and Tim are taking their hiatuses. Here's someone who can sort of

revise the group [Society of Heritage]."

Kong had known that Chung and Lounibos had been involved with Oh; and not wanting to feel like he's pulling the rug from under the two on hiatus, Kong called them up. The three met to discuss Society of Heritage and its future, then agreed to meet again. Over time, the three began meeting regularly, and discussed what each would want in the theater company. Chung suggested bringing Bokyun Chun on board to have a female voice in the group. Chun joined shortly thereafter, and Lodestone Theatre Ensemble was born; it was the parent passing on the responsibilities to the kids.

"Soon had no idea. He," Tim explains through a laugh, "wasn't really...didn't know what we were

doing really, but he was sort of like...Well, he's always said he was gonna pass the baton at some point." And that baton went from Society of Heritage, which still exists as the parent company, to Lodestone.

One new avenue currently in the works for Lodestone is the Internet.

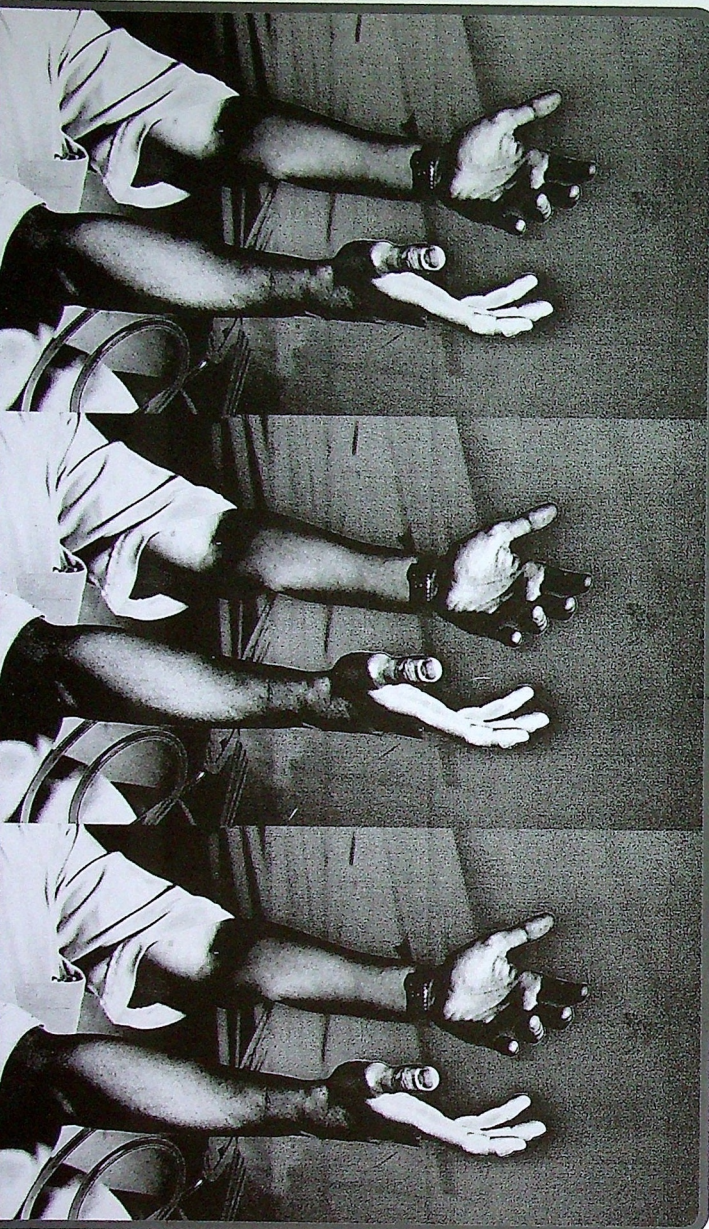
"I don't think theater is ever going to die," Lounibos says. "It just has to evolve. And I think one big outlet, could be the Internet. They talk about kids not going, or people not going to theater because you've got movies, and you've got this and you've got that. But if there's something easily clickable, and you can get it right there, then you don't have to get in a car and go out. Hopefully, people on the



(L-R): Bokyun Chun, Philip Chung, Tim Lounibos

when I was a kid—I think they're amazing at what they do. I have a lot of respect for the martial artists and what they can do, but at the same time, I feel like America needs to see, and the world needs to get a fuller perspective of what it is to be Asian-American. And people aren't used to that. When they do become used to that, then relations are much better, among different people."

Lodestone's mission statement reads, "to develop, create, promote and present edgy, compelling and



Tim Lounibos

impassioned works that bridge communities through truthful and entertaining artistry." Despite the lack of a theater to call home, Lodestone has, and continues to, sustain its mission statement.

Internet will go, wow, this is kinda cool, I wanna see this in person; I wanna see this live."

With the current state of Asian American actors and actresses, the lack of roles available, the stereotypes that emerge in casting and production decisions, and the need for a forum for development and support, Lodestone exists as not only a necessity to curb the social

ignorance, but also as a contributing voice to re-shape contemporary America in the hopes of a more socially aware tomorrow. It is media (film, theater and television) that impacts how people shape their opinions and their views about Asian-Americans.

"I think that Jackie Chan," Lounibos continues, "Jet Li, Bruce Lee—Bruce Lee was an idol of mine

Lodestone's next performance is a Halloween production called *American Monsters*, a collection of three one-act horror stories, which will run from mid-October through November at East Los Angeles College. To find out more about Lodestone, call the SHP/Lodestone Theatre Ensemble hotline at (323) 993-7245, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. ☎



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Legacy of ongolden mountain

By Barbara Chen

*Don't marry a daughter to a man of books,
He locks himself behind doors and sleeps by himself.
Don't marry a daughter to a man who farms,
His feet are covered with manure and his hair, full of dust.
Hurry and marry the daughter to a man from Gold Mountain,
Once he gets off the boat, he has money all in hundred dollar bills.*

So ends the telling Cantonese folk song, which begins *On Gold Mountain*, an exhibit of Chinese American history, on display at the Autry Museum of Western Heritage until January 2001. Based on the same-named book by Lisa See, *On Gold Mountain: A Chinese American Experience* weaves the story of one interracial Chinese-American family into the larger ethnic immigrant history of growth, oppression and achievement in the pre-WWII Western United States.

Consequently, the exhibit has garnered much local English and Chinese media attention, as well as overseas press, according to Jay Aldrich, tourism director for the Autry. And *On Gold Mountain* is climbing its own—with the help of corporate pledges, the exhibit is slated to join others at the Smithsonian Institute—the world's largest museum complex and renowned research center—some time before Summer 2001. While Asian American attendance at the museum averages six percent of visitors annually, Aldrich and the Autry's Visitor Services say that the museum has broken daily attendance records twice since *OGM*'s debut. When I arrive at the museum to experience *OGM* with my Shanghai-born first generation



*Mrs. Leung Jeung's
trousseau, brought from
China to Los Angeles, 1910*

Chinese father, a Southern California native of more than three decades, I know we are in for a treat.

"Oh—they are expecting you? Did you tell them you write for a magazine?" my father queries loudly as we nod hello to the security guard and pass underneath a Chinese New Year's lion, suspended

in the air in the main vestibule. I muse at the idea of pieces of Chinese history making inroads at an establishment dedicated to the cowboy. To my knowledge, not until this past summer's *Shanghai Noon* did our society merge the image of often high-flying, fast-fisted "Chinamen" with the rootin' tootin' sharp-shootin' of the Wild, Wild



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Photo courtesy of Leslie Leong



goldenmountain



West. "Uh, not exactly, Dad..." I answer. "It's been pre-arranged by the magazine," I explain, not wanting to draw attention as my Dad intends, though secretly I am touched by his loving, albeit humorous, pride in me and my "mission" to cover the exhibit.

After I collect my press kit and our admission stickers ("Oh—free-

bies? Good, good," Dad exclaims, in what I think is typical Chinese fashion...something for nothing, always a plus!), Dad and I head to the main watering hole, as we've arrived early enough to enjoy a quick bite in the quiet and pleasantly sun-filled cafeteria. I think, no better testimonial than Dad's, as he is the leading Chinese immigrant character in my

life, though his own exodus trails the gold rush by several generations and originates in Hong Kong, not mainland China, as the exhibit's profiles do. I know that he will enjoy serving as a source of knowledge for me as much as I enjoy his participation as one, and I am right.

"Your great-grandfather came from Gold Mountain, too," says Dad

Photo courtesy of Lisa Sze



over bran muffin and coffee (no dim sum here, of course), referring to the side of our family that makes me consider myself "two-and-a-half," rather than a clean two generations from the homeland. "He bought the wrong ticket, took the wrong boat!" Dad is referring to my South African-born mother's side of the family, and to the "gold coast" of South Africa, which apparently is where my maternal great grandfather sailed to from China in his attempt to find overseas gold-rush prosperity. Knowing my own family's Euro-Chinese-American (South Africa bears a heavy Dutch and British influence) history, it will be interesting for me to see the lineage of Gold Mountainers here, as well as my Dad's own absorption of their sto-

ries, somehow cousins to his own.

We are not disappointed—the exhibit is full of history and detail, enhanced by the inclusion of personal donations of traditional clothing and journals, art, tools, furniture and photographs, along with other pieces of popular culture and anti-Chinese media prevalent during the time. By weaving in the non-traditional experience of the See family (not to be confused with the hard, block-shaped lollipop variety), the exhibit carries an element of story, which makes the wealth of information easily digestible.

The team of Autry curators and See has recreated the gallery entrance to give visitors the feel of a Trans-Pacific steamship—leading me to think of the descriptor, "Fresh

Off the Boat." Inside, the exhibit begins by explaining the political climate (think fleeing destitute relatives of millions of Taiping Rebellion victims, remnants of the First Opium War) in China leading up to the immigration period of the mid-1800s, and features numerous seafaring items, borrowed from the Peabody Essex Museum, which Dad announces is in Salem, Mass. He has been there. I'm surprised to find that the first Chinese graduate of an American college—Yung Wing—matriculated not only as long ago as 1854, but from Yale, apparently the fruit of work by American missionaries who traveled overseas and often sent Chinese boys to the United States for schooling.

Yung Wing is among other ran-

dom, never-before-discussed moments in Chinese American history—provided courtesy of Chinese heritage organizations and other ethnically inclined historians. The majority of *On Gold Mountain* pieces are accompanied with timeline rather than individual-focused information—here are a few pieces of the exhibit which prompted me to pause and put thoughts to paper:

- The Chinese Exclusion Act, effective from 1882 until 1943 prevented new Chinese from entering and working in the country. Meanwhile, the majority of California's harvest labor at the turn of the 20th century was Chinese—gold seekers who ended up finding their livelihood farming and harvesting in vineyards, orchards, hopyards (hops are precursory to malt liquor) and cotton fields.

- Although *On Gold Mountain* purports to tell the story of Chinese Americans in the West ("one of the most dramatic and compelling in our entire Western heritage") by framing the story around immigrant art collector Fong See, the viewpoint and foci of the See experience were continually that of his Caucasian wife Lettie See. Ethnocentrism, unintentional but unavoidable nonetheless?

- 3,000 Chinese came to California in 1851. Just one year later, that number increased approximately seven-fold to more than 20,000. Imagine the travel conditions.

- Chinese women in 1860 made up only five percent of the total immigrant population in the state of California. Eighty-five percent of them found work as prostitutes, according to the exhibit. (A particularly unfortunate statistic, I thought.) Half a century later in 1910, they comprised the same five percent of Chinese immigrants—the result of exclusionary laws enacted in 1882.

- More than 12,000 Chinese worked on the first Central Pacific transcontinental railroad in 1863, leveling roadbeds, creating tunnels and tak-



*"Don't marry a
daughter to a man
of books,
He locks himself
behind doors and
sleeps by himself.*

*Don't marry a
daughter to a man
who farms,
His feet are
covered with
manure and his
hair, full of dust.*

*Hurry and marry
the daughter to a
man from Gold
Mountain,
Once he gets off
the boat, he has
money all in
hundred dollar
bills."*

ing life-risking jobs like clearing mountainsides with explosives. Though railroad capitalists recruited Chinese for all new Western railroads, and though these immigrants comprised 90 percent of the total railroad building workforce, none are seen in photos of—or were apparently invited to—opening ceremonies on the tracks.

- Chinese labor also fueled the growth of the garment industry, between the 1870s and '80s. According to the Library of Congress, the industry's production and value expanded to more than \$3.6 million, up from \$27 thousand over a ten-year period. Some two years after this staggering increase is quantified, the U.S. government effected the Chinese Exclusion Act.

- 1869: *Harpers Weekly*, above the caption, "Pacific Railroad Complete," features a drawn picture of a visibly Chinese (with sinister facial attributes and countryside dress) man courting a more favorably drawn Caucasian woman—the fear of white society? Now that we were done killing ourselves on mountainsides to lay railroads we could not celebrate, we were going to monopolize all the beautiful white women of the land? Or just sew their frocks?

- Ever heard the phrase, "not a Chinaman's chance," or "He doesn't stand [even a] Chinaman's chance [in hell, or other added emphasis]"? It originates from the literal drivings out of Chinese immigrants in Colorado, Washington, Arizona, Wyoming and California—the documented chasing down and running out suffered by "Chinamen" in these states in the late 1870s.

- Fong and Lettie "Ticie" See wed and had five children together before the anti-miscegenation laws forbidding interracial marriages, effective in California 1880 through 1948. Each of their four sons married Caucasian women in Mexico because their half-Chinese heritage made it illegal for them to do so in

Continued on page 60

Gurinder Chadha looking at America with an outsider's lens

By Alex Luu

Way back in 1993, a small independent film called *Bhaji on the Beach* came out of nowhere and delighted both audiences and critics. Directed by first-time director Gurinder Chadha, *Bhaji* is a funny and poignant drama about a group of Indian women from Liverpool who leaves on a day trip to Blackpool. Working from her own script, Chadha peppered the film with quirky yet endearing characters, giving her women characters strength, intelligence, sex appeal, and dignity. *Bhaji* was awarded a nomination for Best Picture at the British Academy Awards.

Seven years later and a couple of made-for-TV productions in between, Chadha returns with the superior feature *What's Cooking?* set to open November 17. *What's Cooking?* is Chadha's personal take on America and its uniquely American celebration Thanksgiving. The film's action takes place all in one day as four separate Los Angeles families



(L-R): Joan
Chen, Kristy
Wu, Kieu
Chinh

(Jewish, Latino, Vietnamese, African American) get together on Thanksgiving. Amidst the preparation, cooking, and anticipation of the ultimate turkey meal, the members of these families fight,

love, reveal skeletons, and ultimately reach out to one another with brutal honesty. *Alfre Woodard, Joan Chen, Mercedes Ruehl, Julianna Margulies, Maury Chaykin, and Dennis Haysbert are*



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Photo courtesy of TriMark Pictures



Gurinder Chadha (center) on the set of *What's Cooking?*

but a few of the A-list Hollywood actors Chadha was able to draw to the project despite a shoestring budget and limited shooting schedule. The calibre of talent in *What's Cooking?* is a testament to Chadha's writing (the script was co-written with partner and husband Paul Mayeda Berges) and her tenacity as a filmmaker dedicated to telling the most human of stories—that of simple folks trying to love and connect with one another.

Anxiously awaiting the theatrical release of *What's Cooking?*, YOLK caught up with Chadha via phone from London, where she is planning her next feature *Are You Experienced?*.

YOLK: What is your ethnic background?

Gurinder Chadha: I was actually born in Kenya in Africa. But there's a big Asian community in East Africa because it used to be called British East Africa. The British had

"I think having grown up being aware and continuing to be aware of prejudice; it ultimately colors my view of the world. I have this imperative to always be challenging it."

colonized India for some 300 odd years and when they colonized Africa they brought a bunch of Indians over so we were already trained in a bureaucratic way. This whole Indian community was brought over to British East Africa, which are now Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya. My grandparents were in that lot. My parents were also born in East Africa. I was also born there too but my family came to England when I was very young. So I grew up in England and consider myself British Indian. The 60's and 70's were pretty tough. In the late 70's around the punk time there were all kinds of riots in England which were really important because it was all about young Black and Asian people who were demanding to be seen and noticed as part of society.

YOLK: What were some of your earliest influences?

GC: After that period of riots and policy change, there suddenly was



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Photo courtesy of TriMark Pictures



(L-R): Juliana Margulies,
Lainie Kazan, Kyra Sedgwick

an explosion of British, Black and Asian culture whether it's writing or film or visual arts. It was a great period of exploring a dual identity. After that came a British kind of Black and Asian music tradition, which I was a big part of.

YOLK: What was your first film about?

GC: It's called *"I'm British, But..."* and it featured four young Asians, my kind of Asians, Pakistani, Bangladeshi from the four different parts of the British Isles—Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales, and England. I interviewed them about how they saw themselves. Each one saw themselves as being from the region as opposed to being British. The film was also about this new music that had started at the time called *bhangra* music, which was a fusion of traditional Indian music mixed with American black music and pop music and hip-hop and reggae. That music was so exciting because it was distinctly British

"I take characters that are usually on the edge of the frame and I put them center stage. And when they're center stage I treat them in a very mainstream manner."

and Asian.

YOLK: How did you come across film and wanting to be a director?

GC: I grew up with Indian movies, Bollywood films. Growing up as a young Indian girl certain roles weren't available to you so you don't think those opportunities are there. There were no other filmmakers around that I knew. When I was at the university I was studying journalism. I used to work on the radio for the BBC. Indian films were escapist nonsense. All very much the same and you never took them very seriously as a kid. You couldn't relate them to your life at all. But in 1985 I saw *My Beautiful Launderette*, and it was the first film I saw that depicted the British Asian experience. I remember watching that movie and sitting there and saying to myself that's what I want to do. I was also really struck by a documentary at the time called *Handsworth Songs* about the riots



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Photo courtesy of TriMark Pictures



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Photo courtesy of TriMark Pictures

in Birmingham and why it happened. It was also about the conflict between Black and Asian communities, and expectations from the older generation of parents who came here and didn't get what they had wanted I suppose. I was in tears when I watched that film.

YOLK: Let's talk about *What's Cooking?* What were the factors that led you to writing it?

GC: It actually started when I was in LA doing publicity for *Bhaji on the Beach*. I was struck at how different LA was in reality compared to what my image of it was.

YOLK: Which was?

GC: The image I had of LA and California was from American movies and television. For example, we in Europe would have no idea about the huge influence and presence of the Latino and Asian communities in LA. Just the bilingual nature of the city, not only in Spanish but also all the signage in Korean in Koreatown. You would have no idea how that city was if you just got your information about America in particular LA from the movies. Parts of LA could be Third World! Koreatown could be Korea. Parts of LA could be parts of Latin America. I was amazed by it. I was asked by Paul [Mayeda Berges], who was then the director of the NAATA (National Asian American Telecommunications Association) festival, to screen *Bhaji*. Paul and I got together after that and we started talking about the bilingual worlds of LA. Here's Paul, a Japanese American who's born and bred in LA, an insider; and there I was, an outsider observing all of it. I was wondering why this reality wasn't depicted on the screen and how Hollywood makes racially segregated films. If it's a Chinese film, it's all Chinese. If it's Black, it's all Black and it's Latino it's all Latino. There was little overlapping except the black cop/white cop movie.

YOLK: They still do that now. It's so overdone it's ridiculous.

GC: (laughs) At that time *Short Cuts* had come out and I remem-

ber thinking all these characters live in LA, but...

YOLK: But where are the people of color?

GC: Yeah! This is not the LA I was seeing in front of my eyes!

YOLK: What was the initial writing process on *What's Cooking?*

GC: I'd continually ask Paul to define people using European class analysis. (laughs) I would say who are these people and where

you've grown up in an area with other people who have also come different places, then you're creating a migratory diasporic culture. What fascinates me most about going to any other city of the world is seeing who the immigrants are there. To see their kids and how the second generation and third generation have adapted to that particular place but still have sort of maintained a sense of who they are. It just means that



(L-R): Juliana Margulies & Kyra Sedgwick

would they buy their sofas from compared to this family. Is this a Levitz family or Robinson's May family or Macy's or Ethan Allen family. I wanted to be specific about where the coffee table and plates were bought from and through that process we were able to specifically define each family's house and therefore the characters. I think if you, like me, come from a particular culture that has moved to another area and if

my eyes are open to those processes with other apart from the Indian community.

YOLK: I also find your distinct un-American point of view of America refreshing. One of the strongest elements of the film is its take on how everyone is divided in LA; that we're physically so close to each other yet we're so disconnected emotionally and spiritually. It's been said time and time again

that when foreign filmmakers make a movie about America, it's actually more accurate and more interesting. Do you find that's true in your case?

GC: I think at the end of the day all of us who aren't White are really touched by racism. We might not have experienced it in a direct way. When something terrible happens to someone who is a person of color it deeply affects us. I think having grown up being aware and continuing to be aware of prejudice; it ultimately colors my view of the world. I don't mean "color" necessarily in a negative way but it makes me feel that I have this imperative to always be challenging it. We just have to; we never stop. I think that's true of every artist of color in some shape or form, even the ones who do very

gurinder chadha filmography

Are You Experienced? (2001)

What's Cooking? (2000)

Rich Deceiver (1995) (TV)

A Nice Arrangement (1994)

What Do You Call an Indian Woman Who's Funny? (1994)

Bhaji on the Beach (1993)

Acting Our Age (1992)

mainstream stuff. I think at the end of the day there's always an element of that. Even in *The Sixth Sense*, one of the great things about that film was that there were all these bloody Indians in it!

YOLK: That's what I was so happy about!

GC: That was so great!

YOLK: That was a huge credit

to M. Night Shyamalan. I was watching that film and I knew that he was Indian when I saw the opening credits. That whole antique store scene with the Indian couple. You would never see that Indian couple in any other Hollywood movie. I'm not sure if other people noticed but I definitely did.



GC: With me, I take characters that are usually on the edge of the frame and I put them center stage. And when they're center stage I treat them in a very mainstream manner. I would never make a film about racism. But I would make a film where every sin-

gle frame is challenging you to rethink the way you think about these people. ☺



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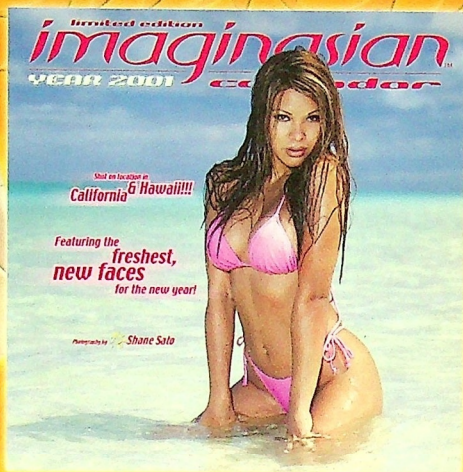
Where: East LA College
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coverfeature

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and the joy of being part of the club

By Shu Farmer



Like much of her life, according to Lauren Tom, her successful audition for the part of "Lena" on the film *The Joy Luck Club* was "an unexpected stroke of good fortune." Her friends tipped her on an open call for a film based on Amy Tan's book about Chinese mothers and their Chinese-American daughters. She decided to audition, and when

director Wayne Wang thought that not only were she capable

enough, but she also resembled France Nguyen—who played her mom in the film—she got the job. "It was a wonderful gift from the Universe," Tom now muses.

The film is just one of many projects that Tom is extremely proud of. Since 1984, Tom has worked on many memorable films and TV shows, including *When a Man Loves a Woman*, *North, Mr. Jones*, "Friends," "Chicago Hope," "Grace under Fire," "Homicide: Life on the Street," and the recent independent film *Catfish in Black Bean Sauce*. Though

unknown to many people, Tom has also worked on several successful animated series. In fact, she has just completed the 100th episode of Fox's "King of the Hill," which she has worked on since 1997, providing the voices for Minh Souphanousinphone and Kahn Souphanousinphone, Jr.

This fall, Tom busts out in a much more feisty and risqué role in the new sitcom "DAG," which NBC has chosen to follow the Emmy award winning "Frasier" in the Tuesday night lineup. "DAG" stars David Alan Grier as a bumbling secret service agent assigned to protect the First Lady, played by the vivacious Delta Burke. Tom plays a con artist named Ginger Chin who, in exchange for a pardon from her jail sentence, becomes the First Lady's secretary.



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Faux snake skin orange/yellow/green skirt by Bubblegum; Orange top, neck tie and blouse by Bubblegum; Shoes by Rocket Dog; Jewelry by Marilyn Rodman, LA Gems; Yamaha VStar 1100cc 2000 provided by Vivian Escalante, president/founder of Women Motorcyclists of Southern California

A prevailing theme in Tom's life has always been to fit in. Growing up, hers was the only Asian family in the predominately Jewish neighborhood of Highland Park in Chicago. Without other Chinese, let alone Asians, to identify with, Tom's parents wanted her to assimilate. As a result, they did not teach her any Chinese. Throughout junior high and high school she felt, in her words, "invisible" and "lost as far as identity." Her shy nature made her want to fit in that much more.

YOLK: In Asian cultures, being a doctor or a business executive holds more prestige than acting. What made you decide to become an actress?

Lauren Tom: I always thought I would be a dancer. I really didn't have the talent to be a doctor, scientist, or business executive. I wasn't any good in math or the sciences. And those stereotypes of all Asians being good in math are not true. I was so shy back then, believe it or not. [Dancing] was the perfect way for me to express myself without having to talk. My mom would drive me over to dance class after school where I would spend five hours a day practicing. I took ballet, modern dance, and jazz. And it paid off.

Indeed it did. When Tom was 17 years old, an off-Broadway show called "A Chorus Line" came through Chicago on its national tour. She had just finished high school, in just three years, and had started her first semester at Northwestern University. After much convincing from her friends, Tom decided to audition for the show.

LT: I didn't know how to act or sing, but I could dance really well. So they hired me and gave me some acting and singing lessons. Then they brought me on the national tour to train me. And after that, they flew me to New York to be on Broadway.

After "A Chorus Line," Tom was involved with the Neighborhood Playhouse and the New York Shakespeare Festival, where she met David Henry Wang, who was there promoting his very first play.

Afterward she landed the Broadway play "Hurlyburly," from which she made the transition from musicals to more dramatic work. Amidst all these changes, tragedy occurred. Tom's father had planned to drive her brother to Stanford from Chicago and then fly to New York for her opening night of "A Chorus Line." But he never saw his daughter perform. He died from a heart attack.

"I really didn't have the talent to be a doctor, scientist, or business executive. And those stereotypes of all Asians being good in math are not true."

LT: That was really the most incredible time in my life right next to the worst thing that could have happened. I flew home to Chicago for the funeral and to be with my family for a couple of weeks. The show held my position for me. Then I flew back and opened. It was really hard on me. But I'm one of those people who believe in reincarnation and life after death and at some point, somewhere up there, [my father] saw [the show] anyway. My father was really against me going into [show] business. But my mother was very, very supportive. She had these huge hopes and ambitions for

me. When I got the role on "A Chorus Line," my dad thought well, maybe she's got some talent. So we struck this deal that if I didn't become a big star in six months I would come home.

Tom spent the next 7 to 8 years in New York, doing loads of theater and getting plenty of experience under her belt. During that time, she received an Obie Award—similar to the Tony Award for off-Broadway plays—in the Performance Category for the play, "American Notes." Subsequently, she got a little part in Cadillac Man, with Robin Williams, as Helen the Dim Sum Girl.

LT: It started off as a cameo appearance, but because we were improvising so much with Robin, it evolved into a real part. The talent agent at "The Tonight Show" thought it was so funny they wanted to have me on as a guest. So they flew me to California. I went out and Bill Cosby was on. He talked so long that I was bumped off. You really can't tell Bill Cosby to shut up [laughing]. He talked all through his time and my time.

Fortunately, "The Tonight Show" invited Tom back. That was another piece of good fortune because Cheech Marin saw her segment on "The Tonight Show" and immediately cast her for his comedy pilot. Although the sitcom "Culture Clash" lasted only six episodes, Tom was able to garner five network deals for her own show. Yet, frustration began to set in as none of the deals worked out. The Joy Luck Club came around soon after and that started a string of projects that have kept Tom busy ever since.

YOLK: You were wonderful as "Lena" in *The Joy Luck Club*. I thought the movie really brought Amy Tan's book to life. A lot of Chinese-Americans related to the movie/book. Did you find anything that connected with you?

LT: I knew I was able to do the role because I had the ability to explore all the different sides of myself. There was a place in me to give up my voice and my power to be able to do that role as Lena. *The Joy Luck Club* was an incredible experi-



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laurentom



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Black tank dress by Hardtail

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ence and probably one of the projects that I'm most proud of just because it really was one of the first all Asian American stories to come out. There were so many Asians working on the project, behind the camera and in front of it. It was very groundbreaking.

YOLK: What was it like working with all the other actresses?

LT: It was very interesting because we were like a family. And the mothers were so motherly and would say things like I was their daughter.

YOLK: What did your mother think of the film?

LT: My mother is really dynamic and she's tough, just like my grandmother. And she kind of felt like, "Oh, what's everybody crying about. You know that's life." But she really enjoyed the movie. For most people in America, they've never seen or heard that type of story before. But I think the most gratifying aspect of doing that project was

people coming up to us afterwards saying, "I haven't spoken to my mom in ten years, but I'm going to try and reach out to them." At one time I felt like, "Oh my god, I'm such a bum, what am I contributing to society? I'm not a doctor; I don't save lives." But in moments like that, you do feel like you can make a difference.

Now a seasoned veteran in Hollywood, Tom prefers TV sitcoms to full-length feature films. Tom worked on one of the most famous and successful sitcoms "Friends," as Julie, the Chinese American girlfriend of David Schwimmer's character, Ross.

LT: Out of the blue, I was one day watching the show thinking it would be cool to work on it. And believe it or not, I received a phone call the next day from my agent. They had called to ask me to be on the show. I knew eventually it was going to end and that I would be leaving the show, but I actually felt bad when

[Ross] broke up with me. I had a wonderful time working with all of them. The very first day I was on the set, they took me out to lunch. But the tabloids fabricated this horrible article about me saying that I got fired off the show because I was, in so many words, a bitch, and that Jennifer Aniston and I were always having cat fights. Now that was terrible because none of it was true.

YOLK: How did you get involved in the animated series?

LT: "King of the Hill" was my first one. I love doing it. The auditioning process is very long. They like to use the same people. After I did that one, I just started getting booked for the shows without having to audition anymore. What I like the most about it is that it doesn't matter how old you are, what you look like or what you're wearing. It's much more relaxing than being on camera simply because you're not on camera.



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Sweater, halter top, & snake pants by Miss Sixty
Jewelry by Marilyn Rothman, LA Gemz

YOLK: Since 1984, in both film and TV, you have played many roles, from a reporter to a broker, from girlfriend to married woman with a past. Out of all the roles you have played, which ones did you enjoy the most?

LT: The role of "Lena" in the *Joy Luck Club* and I really enjoyed Peter Sellers' "The Peony Pavilion," a 16th century Chinese play, a very famous fable in China. It was an epic. I played the lead character. I also really liked playing a manic-depressive [Amanda] in the film, *Mr. Jones*. The director of the film had a very strong background in Improvisation Theater and he would let us improvise in our acting in the film.

YOLK: How is today's working environment different from back then, pertaining to the acceptance of Asian Americans? Is it still an uphill battle?

LT: I think it's getting easier. There are more Asian Americans being seen on film, television, in magazines, newspapers, and as broad-

"In the 80s, there wasn't that many of us on the air and on the big screen. There wasn't anyone's career that I wanted to emulate. There just wasn't anyone at the time."

cast journalists. In the 80s, there wasn't that many of us on the air and on the big screen. There wasn't anyone's career that I wanted to emulate. There just wasn't anyone at the time.

Tom also thinks the Asian American community should be more supportive.

LT: For example, in *The Margaret Cho Show*, someone wrote in and complained, "Why are they using sticky rice? Sticky rice is Japanese, not Korean." This kind of thing makes me roll my eyes. It's like whatever. I kind of feel like you got to pick your battles and I basically think the community killed that show. And it's not like I don't understand, but at the same time you have to be supportive and give your criticism in a constructive way. Not just "This is horrible, take it off the air." I really don't think that is the goal. When you make people nervous, they are afraid to do anything.

YOLK: Do you think

Continued on page 60

themanymfacesand voicesoflaurentom

In addition to starring in the new sitcom "DAG," and feature films *The Joy Luck Club* and *Catfish in Black Bean Sauce*, Lauren Tom also lends her voice for an extensive gallery of cartoon characters. YOLK asked Lauren to give her personal take on some of these characters:



Dana Tan (*Batman Beyond: The Movie*): "I've never looked this curvy, leggy, and fat free in my entire life, and I doubt I ever will."

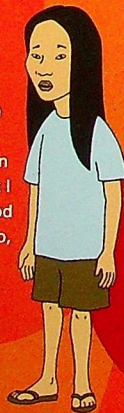
Amy Wong (*Futurama*):

"What a gift to be able to work with Matt Groening every week. Plus I get to be 20 years old again and a bit of a tart!"



Connie (*King of the Hill*):

"Ah, puberty. Connie is much better adjusted than I was when I was 12. I think I have pretty good taste in men too, Bobby Hill rules."



Trish (*Rocket Power*):

"She's what I'd sound like if I was a rollerblading surfer chick."



Minh (*King of the Hill*):

"Minh sounds like my grandmother—sweet, pushy, competitive, and ballsy."



Fall/Winter 2000

Batman Beyond: The Movie courtesy of Warner Bros.
Rocket Power courtesy of Kelsey Group.
Futurama courtesy of 20th Century Fox Film Corporation. All rights reserved.
King of the Hill courtesy of Fox Broadcasting.

an affair at sea

Smooth sails ahead for actors Will Yun Lee (TNT's *Witchblade* and *What's Cooking?*) and Marie Matiko (*The Art Of War*) in fall fashions featuring DKNY and Mayren Viray.

Photographer: Jaimee Itagaki

Make-up: Amy Harmon

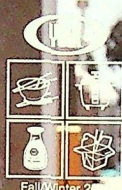
Hair: Anthony Dodd/Dion Peronneau

Stylist: Dujuana Brossman



Fall/Winter 2000

Will: Stone grey crewneck sweater by DKNY, Beverly Center \$88; Stone cobalt long-sleeved shirt by DKNY, Beverly Center \$49.50; Stone grey pants by DKNY, Beverly Center \$88; Black call shoes by Aldo.
Marie: Striped velvet cobalt/chocolate brown halter and cobalt fishtail skirt by Mayren Viray



Fall/Winter 2

Model: Greta Gerwig
 Hair: L'Oréal Paris
 Makeup: L'Oréal Paris
 Styling: L'Oréal Paris
 Photography: L'Oréal Paris



Fall/Winter 2000

Maria: Chocolate brown sheer silk top by DKNY; Beverly Center \$198; Chocolate brown pleated skirt by DKNY; Beverly Center \$298; Brown leather belt by DKNY; Beverly Center \$55; Black orchid luster calf boot by DKNY; Beverly Center \$350

fashion



Fall/Winter 2000

Wife: Red shirt by DKNY, \$118.
Black leather pants by DKNY, Beverly Center \$298.
Black calf shoes by Aldo

↑
43



Fall/Winter 2000

Will: Red shirt by DKNY \$118;
Black leather pants by DKNY, Beverly Center \$298;
Black calf shoes by Aldo



Fall/Winter 2000

Willi Caratini zip front leather jacket by DKNY, Beverly Center \$995;
 Charrelise long sleeve sweater by DKNY, Beverly Center \$158; Khaki plain
 front cotton pants by DKNY, Beverly Center \$79.50; Cognac hardsell alpaca
 by DKNY, Beverly Center \$120; Marlier Tie-dye tank dress by Mayren
 May Black orchid luster call hood by DKNY, Beverly Center \$150

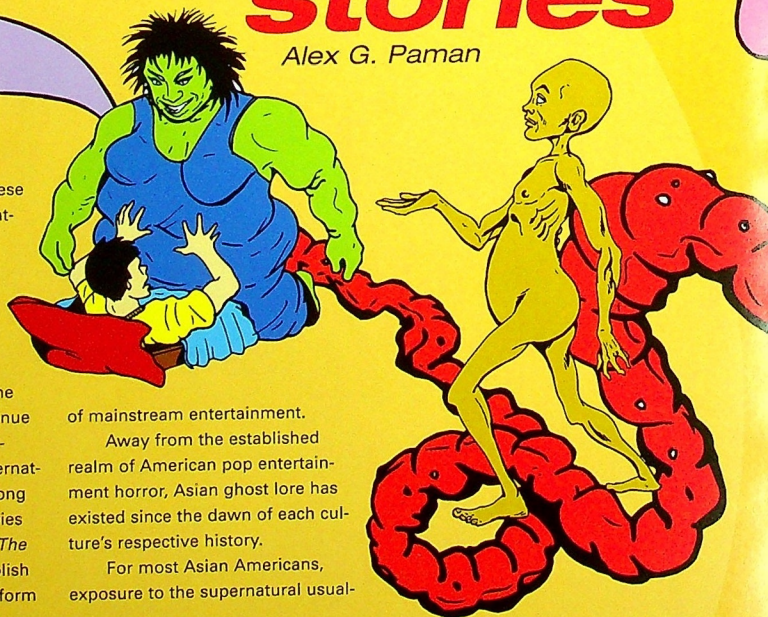


asianghost stories

Alex G. Paman

Vampires! Witches!

Werewolves! Serial killers! These very names conjure up the frightening images that make up the American pop horror culture. From the early days when the Universal Studios Monsters ruled the silver screen, to the slasher movie trends of *Nightmare on Elm Street* and the *Scream* trilogy, audiences continue to be both fascinated and entertained with horror and the supernatural. Fox TV's "The X-Files," along with such groundbreaking movies as *The Blair Witch Project* and *The Sixth Sense*, have helped establish the supernatural as a lucrative form



of mainstream entertainment.

Away from the established realm of American pop entertainment horror, Asian ghost lore has existed since the dawn of each culture's respective history.

For most Asian Americans, exposure to the supernatural usual-

ly comes in the form of old stories told by parents and grandparents. Usually set in the dim cities and countrysides of their childhood, far away from America, the older generation often reflects upon an almost mystical landscape of spirits and unexplained phenomena. In the Eastern mind, yin and yang, karma and reincarnation, past and present, and life and death are all one. One cannot exist without the other, and

makes up the endless cycle of life. The influence of the three great Asian religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam), mixed with traditional animist and increasing Christian traditions, have created a unique environment where creatures from different faiths exist together without conflict and are continually feared and respected. It also links modern society with its ancestral, more rural folk practices and superstitions.

Like their Western counterparts, Asian ghosts come in various shapes and sizes.

While many resemble their former living selves, some are transformed into grotesque, misshapen demons. Some look like shadows or wisps of smoke, while others look like levitating balls of light. Asian ghosts often possess characteristics that go against popular Western classification.

Chinese ghosts (known as *guei*) form a class of spirits that are as diverse and exotic as any ghost pantheon in the

world. Not only do they exist in Mainland China, but literally in all Chinese communities throughout the world. And like language, each ghost type has various regional variations. Common ghosts include the restless spirits of "improper death" (people killed prematurely, violently, or buried improperly), ghosts of drowning victims and suicides that entice others to their deaths to replace them, ghosts that press and suffocate people while sleeping in their beds, and the cinematically popular "hopping ghosts" (spirits possessing a corpse that literally hop to attack their victims, their bodies hardened with rigor).

The ages-old Chinese tradition of ancestor worship produces perhaps China's most malevolent entity, the Hungry Ghost, or *preta*. It is believed that the malice of these ghosts is directly related to their receiving of offerings from their descendants, or lack of it. Spirits must have descendants provide offerings to them, or they will become "hungry ghosts," spirits who wander the world picking up crumbs of offerings.

Filipino ghosts (known as *multo*, from the Spanish word *muerte* meaning dead) and their habits are greatly influenced by Roman Catholicism, the country's dominant religion. According to popular belief, a soul will return three days after the person's passing, like Jesus Christ rising from the dead on the third day. It will remain among the living for 40 days, taking care of unfinished business. These ghosts can be found in areas where death has occurred—hospitals, schools, rivers, and old battlefields, even in one's own home. The majority of Filipino ghost stories revolve around the period of time after a loved one's passing. Many claim to see the deceased following their daily routine as if they were still alive. Others claim seeing their deceased loved ones



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as they were waking up, staring at them from the bedside. One of the most famous Filipino ghosts is the "White Lady," a folk version of the Mexican La Llorona and the American Vanishing Hitchhiker.

Japanese ghosts (*obake*) are a unique blend of native Shinto and Buddhist beliefs. They figure prominently in popular art, from traditional woodblock prints, to Kabuki stage plays. It is believed that when a person dies, his soul enters a limbo-like world before passing to the next life. It is in this region where the soul can come back as a ghost, or *yurei*. Unlike classical ghost types, *yurei* are notoriously vengeful and persistent. They are depicted as being pale and haggard, their hair falling loosely upon the head and shoulders. They are often cloaked in white, with their bodies tapering to a narrow tip.

Thai ghosts (known collectively as *phii*) share the same

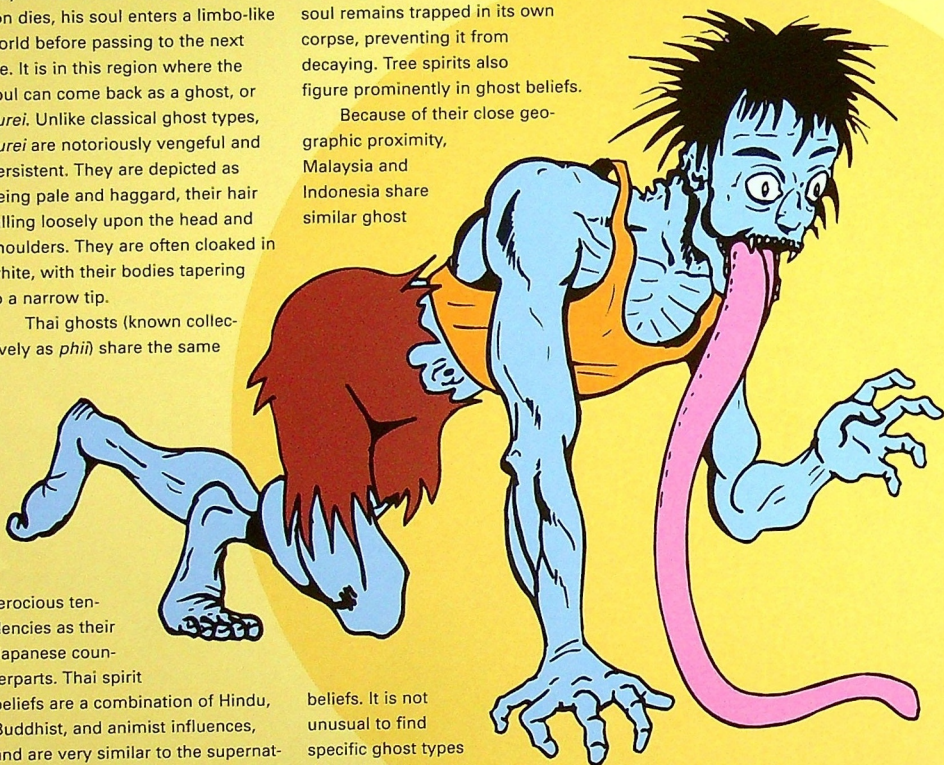
killed, and then buried under buildings and structures. After dying, their spirits would become devils and in turn become fierce protectors of that structure.

Other deadly spirits include the Widow Ghost, a specter that suffocates men in bed; the Filth Ghost, a demonic spirit that flies at night as nothing more than a human head followed by its own entrails; and the Still-born Ghost, a dead baby whose soul remains trapped in its own corpse, preventing it from decaying. Tree spirits also figure prominently in ghost beliefs.

Because of their close geographic proximity, Malaysia and Indonesia share similar ghost

emerge from their human hosts while they sleep. Java is home to various spirits that frighten, possess, and protect sacred grounds. The *Toyol*, also common in Malaysia, is a spirit child that is held responsible for the theft or acquisition of money.

Asia is a unique place where there is no separation between myth and reality, science and religion. In recent decades, Asian cul-



ferocious tendencies as their Japanese counterparts. Thai spirit beliefs are a combination of Hindu, Buddhist, and animist influences, and are very similar to the supernatural *nats* of Burma (Myanmar), and the *neak ta* of Cambodia. Of all the various spirits found in popular folklore, the most feared are the *Phii Tai Hong*, or ghosts of the violently dead. These ghosts come from those who suffered and died excruciating deaths, or died unexpectedly. They often lure and kill the living in the same manner as they themselves were killed. The deadliest of the *Phii Tai Hong* are the ghosts of women who died during pregnancy or childbirth, creating a dual specter of a mother and her dead fetus. In fact, these ghosts were so feared throughout Thai history that pregnant women were often abducted,

beliefs. It is not unusual to find specific ghost types living in both countries, varying only in dialectic pronunciation. Malaysian spirits are called *hantu*, a generic term describing a vast class of supernatural entities. Besides classical ghosts, *hantu* can also mean disease and forest ghosts, demons, were-animals, and even elementals. Whereas werewolves are the most prominent shape-shifters in the West, were-tigers and were-foxes reign supreme in the East.

Indonesian ghosts also run rampant throughout the archipelago. The paradise island of Bali is home to the *Leyaks*, malevolent shape-shifting forest spirits that

ture has spread all over the world, in the form of food, music, and cinema. Is the West ready to embrace Asian ghostlore? Will Hungry Ghosts, dead Samurai brides, and suffocating bed spirits replace vampires, werewolves and zombies? Only time and marketability can tell. In the meantime, Asian ghosts will continue to do what they do best: hover deep in the shadows of our fears, superstitions and nightmares. As long as we continue to pursue the meaning of life after death; to avoid the shadows that play at midnight; to fear the unknown, all our ghosts shall surely flourish. ☞



Fall/Winter 2000

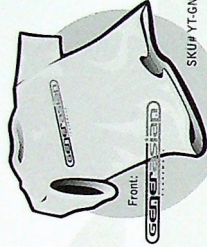
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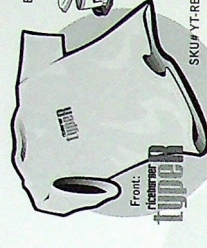
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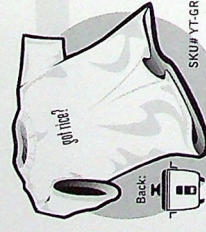


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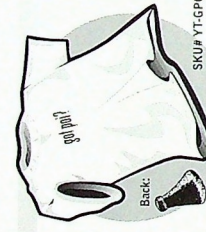
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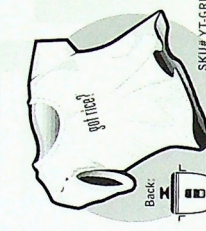
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"got rice?" T-SHIRT
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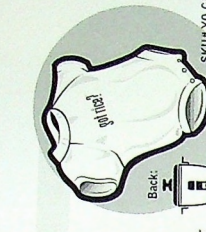
SKU# YT-GAD

"got addob?" T-SHIRT
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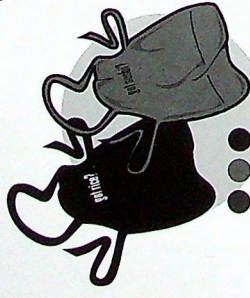
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"got rice?" WOMEN'S BABY TEE
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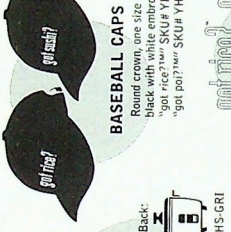
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"got rice?" SWEATSHIRT
90% Cotton, 10% Polyester Fleece, 9oz. Set in sleeves, conversational armholes, neck and waistband, cotton/spandex rib trim. Embroidered. Sizes: M, L, and XL only. Available in black only.



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"got rice?" HOODED SWEATSHIRT
90% Cotton, 10% Polyester Fleece, 9oz. Full hood with matching drawstring and metal grommets, pouch pocket, ribbed cuffs and bottom band. Embroidered logo. Sizes: M, L, and XL only. Available in black only.



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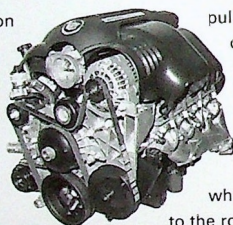
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2002 cadillac escalade

SUVs are so common

these days no one even bats an eyelash when they're on the road. That's about to seriously change with the 2002 Escalade from Cadillac. The words Cadillac and SUV seem almost like an oxymoron. Class and bulk don't appear to go hand-in-hand. But that's just what Cadillac has done with its 2002 model. Originally introduced in the fall of 1998, Cadillac has steadily been building a more hip clientele with its Escalade. The 2002 Escalade is something to behold. The main highlight amongst countless amazing ones is its 345 hp Vortec 6000 V8 engine (AWD model). Its power is unmatched; its function flawless. The 6000 engine actually purrs like a kitten, making the ride inside the vehicle smooth and almost noise-free. Best of all, the engine provides an exceptional balance of power,



pulling power and fuel economy. Another great feature is its Road Sensing Suspension System.

The best out of all other competitors, this system calibrates the wheels and readjusts them to the road in a nano-second if you're spinning or swerving out of control. Other highlights include a high-tech single load six-disc CD changer on the dashboard, one piece lightweight liftgate, larger redesigned seven-spoke wheels, larger fold-away rearview mirrors, ultrasonic rear parking assist and probably the most coolest feature for the larger Asian American families, extended standard third-row, eight-passenger seating with best-in-class comfort. Let's not forget the unmistakable Cadillac wreath and crest

on the front of the vehicle, announcing to all others on the road that you're coming and that you're driving a Cadillac. With all of these nifty features and gadgets, what else would you need? With Cadillac's outstanding 2002 Escalade, SUV should stand for Superior UNIVERSAL Vehicle. 🚗

—Alex Luu



Fall/Winter 2000

Photos courtesy of Cadillac

Just as important as your business
is the gift your individuality brings.

A vision that may have never
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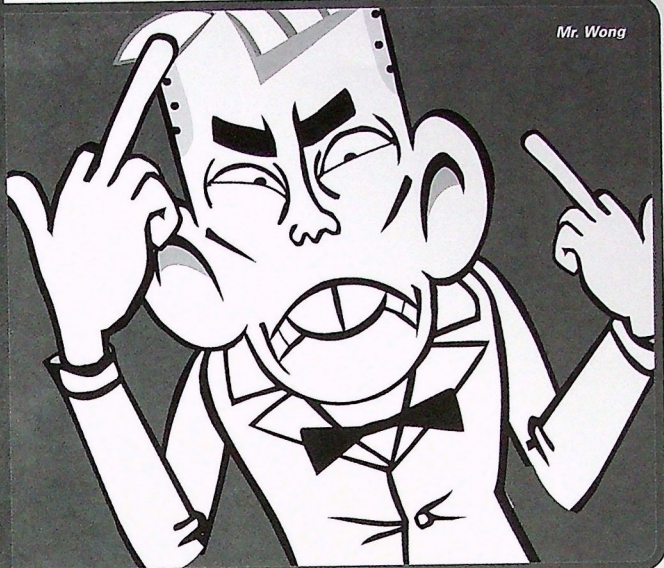
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MR. WONG

www.icebox.com

"Mr. Wong" is a shocking and sad throwback to the Charlie Chan/Hop Sing days of Asian/Asian American character portrayals in media. Mr. Wong is a buck-toothed, slanty-eyed, old Chinese houseboy whom speaks with a heavy accent and is at the beck and call of his white master, Ms. Pam. In almost every episode, Ms. Pam orders Mr. Wong around and pummels him with verbal and psychological insults. Sample lines from Ms. Pam, "*I thought you yellow people were sly and could live on your wits,*" and upon seeing a poisoned Mr. Wong, "*Gee, you're more yellow than usual.*" Of course, the "joke" is that when his white superior abuses Mr. Wong he squints his eyes even more and gives Ms. Pam the middle finger. (ha ha) "Mr. Wong" has been getting a lot of attention from media watchdog groups for its blatant racist caricature as well as enormous amounts of hits. The verdict is split on this cartoon—there are an equal number of Asian Americans who find nothing wrong with it, as there are ones that are seriously offended by it.

FOO

www.eruptor.com

Foo is an Asian American hip-hop wannabe who gets into all kinds of trouble at his work, home, and streets. One of the first episodes has Foo eating his co-workers' lunches on his break. His superior confronts him and we learn that Foo has already been fired and is just hanging around the office for lack of nothing better to do. Most of the other episodes find Foo in these hijinks, which are neither funny nor entertaining. The artwork is so-so, a little bit better than the usual Saturday morning cartoons but nothing to write home about.

BRUCE FLEA

www.bruceflea.com

This is a clever and cool take on the immortal Bruce Lee. The creators have made Bruce into a flea and he goes around fighting and quoting wise phrases and words. The faux Confucius jargon is definitely lame (you'd half expect David Carradine to make a cameo appearance), but the characterizations are fun. You can definitely tell that the behind-the-scenes team truly have respect and an affinity to Bruce and his multi-faceted gifts and skills.



Bruce's compadre is a character with the name of Slim Belly, a visual spoof/homage to Jim Kelly's character from *Enter The Dragon*. The best thing about "Bruce Flea" is the cool jazzy background music, giving the cartoon an overall sense of class and sophistication. Makes you think of what martial arts movies would have looked and sounded like if it was scored by Miles Davis or John Coltrane.

—Alex Luu



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CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON

Sony Pictures Classics

Based on the classic Chinese novel of the same name, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* is a sumptuous feast of majestic landscapes, flying warriors, ambiguous villains, and stunning action choreography with a cast headed by Chow Yun-Fat and Michelle Yeoh. Yun-Fat is famed swordsman Li Mu Bai, who is at a critical crossroads in life. Mu Bai decides to give his sword (Green Destiny) to old friend Sir Te. Mu Bai entrusts the sword to Shu Lien (Yeoh) to give to Sir Te. Once at Sir Te's compound, a masked thief steals the sword in the night. This incident sets off a chain of events that ultimately reveal not only a bigger conspiracy devised by a master criminal named Jade Fox but also unearths Mu Bai's true feelings for Shu Lien.

It is a delight to finally see two of international cinema's biggest cons, Yun-Fat and Yeoh, share screen time. Yeoh's long silent gazes at Yun-Fat are priceless, speaking of years of repressed passion and love. Yun-Fat also gives a quiet yet powerful performance. Newcomer Zhang Ziyi almost steals the show as the lovely but lethal Jen Yu, an aristocrat who is not what she seems.

Master action choreographer/director Yuen Wo-Ping, kicks his



famous wire work up ten notches; the fighting sequences have got to be seen to be believed. It is a given that the heroes and villains in this particular genre possess magnificent skills that enable them to fly through the air, much like monks' apparent invincibility in the Shaolin Temple martial arts genre. The first encounter between Shu Lien and the sword thief is in itself a masterpiece of gravity-defying leaps, bullet-speed whirls, and ferocious hand-to-hand combats.

The only shortcoming of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* is its unevenness. By trying to combine too many characters, supporting characters, and subplots, Yun-Fat and Yeoh's characters aren't completely fleshed out. Still, some of these imperfections still do not take away the power and romanticism of this film. At its core, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* is really about the infinite power of love and the consequences of sacrificial love, a romance set against the dizzying background of a forgotten time and actions of forgotten warriors.

RATING: ★★★★★

—Alex Luu



GIRLFIGHT

Screen Gems

Great actors possess the ability to tell everything by saying nothing. Michelle Rodriguez is off to a very great start with a captivating performance in her debut film, *Girlfight*. Just from the opening credits, when she gives us a deadly stare through her half closed eyes, we know all about her character inside and out.

Also making her debut is first time writer/director Karyn Kusama. A former assistant to one of the founding fathers of independent filmmaking, John Sayles (who served as Executive Producer and has a small role as a science teacher), it's no wonder that Kusama won the Best Director and shared the Best Picture award at this year's Sundance Film Festival.

Growing up motherless in the projects with a volatile father (Paul Calderon, *Pulp Fiction*) has given Diana (Rodriguez) a chip-on-the-shoulder attitude. A chance visit to the athletic club where her brother is taking boxing lessons sparks something in Diana. Ironically, it is this place that will serve to tone her down and harness her energy. With the help of an apprehensive trainer (Jamie Tirelli), Diana finds a sense of accomplishment she is looking for and needs. And it is also in the ring where, as in her life, there is no one to depend on but herself.

Credit must be given to Rodriguez and Kusama for taking a feisty character and making her likeable. However, the film isn't totally without flaws; some dialogue falls flat and, at times, some performances wane. But these are small blemishes on careers that can only get better with more opportunities.

RATING: ★★★★★

—Mark Preciado



Fall/Winter 2000



AUTUMN IN NEW YORK

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer

After an impressive debut with *Xiu Xiu: The Sent Down Girl*, actress turned director Joan Chen falls into the sophomore slump with the predictable *Autumn In New York*.

Richard Gere stars as Will Keane, trendy restaurateur whose womanizing ways are changed when he meets and falls for Charlotte Fielding (Winona Ryder; completely miscast as the naive 22 year old). But just as the older Will learns to love and become monogamous, the film takes a sharp turn and diagnoses Charlotte with a terminal heart tumor.

Autumn In New York's main problem is finding exactly just what kind of film it wants to be. A May/December romance picture one minute, *Love Story* the next. But unlike that classic tearjerker, here there is no chemistry between the two leads and their relationship seems forced.

Gere's performance elevates past the contrived material and really is the only one to watch. He makes you understand his pain and suffering over losing a loved one. It is sad of this to be said of the film, but when one of its lead characters starts dying, the movie gains life.

RATING: ★ ★

—Mark Preciado



THE WATCHER

Universal Pictures

The Watcher gets its title from a killer who spies, day in and day out, on lonely women going about their most trivial occurrences in their lives, so much so that he can tell what they are going to do next. The same could be said about the movie.

Low on suspense, *The Watcher* is more of a cat-and-mouse game between Keanu Reeves' serial killer, David Allen Griffin, and James Spader's FBI agent, Joel Campbell. Depressed over his inability to catch his adversary and save 11 victims, Campbell lies low in Chicago where he has become pill-dependent and a regular visitor to a psychologist played by Marisa Tomei (who looks like she could use therapy herself. Marisa, you haven't made a film in years, why so haggard?). But when Griffin also relocates and starts the game up again, the two rivals are reinvigorated with their need for one another and the thrill of the chase.

Reeves and Spader, especially, give fine performances, but the film is hampered by routine police chases and investigations. First time director Joe Charbanic, whose credits include music videos for Reeves' band, Dogstar, employs a technique and style that is a complete waste of Academy Award winning cinematographer Michael Chapman's (*Raging Bull*, *Taxi Driver*) talent. With these boring action scenes and annoying strobe effects that distract the viewer, what's the point in "watch"ing?

RATING: ★ ★

—Mark Preciado



THE ART OF WAR

Warner Bros.

Where would modern action films be without the release of *The Matrix*? Seems like the bulk of them nowadays are "borrowing" martial arts or bullet-dodging techniques from the sci-fi film. *The Art Of War* is no exception.

The script by Wayne Beach and Simon Davis not only lifts from the best, it also takes from the not-so-great. Very similar to his own *U.S. Marshals*, Wesley Snipes again plays a framed fugitive on the run, this time as a secret agent hired by the United Nations to stop the interference to an impending Chinese trade agreement. Mistaken for an assassin of a diplomat, the only one who can clear his name is a U.N. interpreter played by Marie Matiko. Newcomer Matiko is one to watch. She's got substantial acting chops to match her beauty; and stands her own opposite Snipes and co-star Donald Sutherland.

Unfortunately, even with a solid cast of veterans and fresh faces, *The Art of War* is nothing but a standard action-thriller. The action scenes are routine and the story line seems strung together just to get to the next chase. My advice to filmmakers: If you are going to rip off anything from other material, you should have started with the Sun Tsu book and used more than just the title.

RATING: ★ ★

—Mark Preciado



Fall/Winter 2000



GODZILLA 2000

Columbia TriStar

For those of you (wait a minute, I meant everyone) still reeling from the gigantic piece of turd called *Godzilla* Sony Pictures laid in 1998, this latest Japanese rendition should make you feel a lot better. Whether you're a hardcore fan of this atomic reptile or not, *Godzilla 2000* still delivers the goods. The plot is once again standard for these types of popcorn movies. The *Godzilla* Prediction Unit has been tracking Godzilla and trying to really understand why he does what he does (simple guys, big monsters step on shit and kill people!). They come across a giant UFO that turns into an alien monster and of course all hell breaks loose. This is where the fun begins. Watching this *Godzilla*, in all of his rubber suit glory, destroy Tokyo and breathe fire is much more thrilling and fun than watching all that CGI crap that Roland Emmerich and Dean Devlin produced for the American version. The big difference between *Godzilla 2000* and the Matthew Broderick piece of crap (oh wait, I said that already) is that the Japanese writers/directors truly respect the monster whereas the American filmmakers, in true lame unoriginal Hollywood fashion, took a wonderful concept and drained the life out of it with bad dialogue, bad story, bad acting, and ear-splitting special effects. *Godzilla 2000* wins the viewer over with simplicity and allows the audience to actually connect emotionally with the monster.

RATING: ★★☆☆

—Alex Luu



HIGHLANDER: ENDGAME

Dimension Films

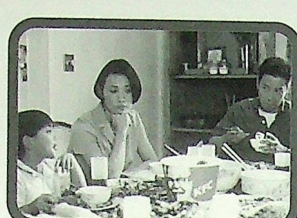
Highlander: Endgame is definitely a movie for hardcore *Highlander* fans. Only the truly devoted of this series will care for its character Connor MacLeod (Christopher Lambert). For non-fans, this fourth installment will surely disappoint in a big way.

This time around, Connor and Duncan team up to do battle with the evil Jacob Kell (an overacting Bruce Payne I). The quieter moments are actually more interesting than the action scenes. It's not that the sword duels, motorcycle crashes and fist-to-fist combats are boring. It's just that interspersed are so much mumbo jumbo about "chosen ones" and corny spiritualism that the purity of the first movie and Connor's struggles are completely gone. One of the few highlights of *Endgame* is the chance to see Hong Kong action man Donnie Yen as one of Kell's henchman Jin Ke. For American audiences, this is their first introduction to Yen, much like Jet Li's villain role in *Lethal Weapon 4*. Yen doesn't exactly steal the show from the movie's leads, but he does present a convincing case of why Miramax has already signed him to a three-picture deal. Watch out for Yen to break through in a big way in the next couple of years.

Let's hope the title *Endgame* means that there won't be any more *Highlander* sequels. If there must be more, I'm going to personally chop off some heads myself.

RATING: ★★☆☆

—Alex Luu



WHAT'S COOKING?

Trimark Pictures

Arguably one of the best films of the year, *What's Cooking* tackles two of the most challenging film devices—the ensemble cast and having everything happen in the course of one day. That day is Thanksgiving and four separate families (Vietnamese, Jewish, African American, and Latino) make up the ensemble.

What's Cooking's delicate magic is weaving all these seemingly separate families into a bigger mosaic. There is something soothing about watching strong women and men interacting with one another, talking with each other and listening to each other. Chadha pulls off a miracle with the actors. There is no bad performance here. The cast is a virtual who's who list of excellent performers, such as Mercedes Ruehl, Dennis Haysbert, Kieu Chinh, as well as solid veterans Maury Chaykin, Lainie Kazan and newcomers Will Yun Lee and Kristy Wu.

The script, co-written by Chadha and her husband Paul Mayeda Berges, is intelligent, hilarious, and multi-layered. Every character, major and minor, are completely fleshed out. *What's Cooking* does more in its 106 minutes than most movies with a much longer running time. Anyone looking for a small miracle on screens this Thanksgiving holiday should run to the theaters and treat themselves to *What's Cooking*. Films like this one rarely gets a big marketing push and it is only word-of-mouth that will save it from a limited release.

RATING: ★★★★★

—Alex Luu



Fall/Winter 2000

videoreviews

RICH AND FAMOUS & TRAGIC HERO

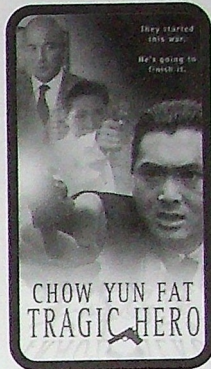
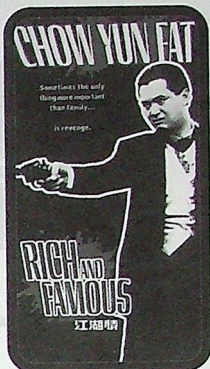
Tai Seng Video Marketing

If you want to see great Hong Kong cinema, look no further than these two 1987 releases, now finally getting the widescreen treatment courtesy of Tai Seng Video. *Rich and Famous* and *Tragic Hero* are two phenomenal films that play like Francis Ford Coppola's *Godfather* series. The characters are well written, the supporting characters unforgettable, and the action explosive. Chow Yun-Fat plays triad leader Li Ah-Chai, who helps two young brothers Yung and Kwok (Alex Man and Andy Lau) with a seemingly simple gambling debt. What unfolds is an all-out war between warring factions of the triads that tests Ah-Chai's loyalty and compassion. *Rich and Famous* wastes no time in its introduction of everyone involved in this tragic tale of friendship, honor, and redemption. What makes this first film fascinating is the way director Taylor Wong condenses plot and character motivation in quick scenes. The movie moves at breakneck speed, yet doesn't feel rushed. Though Yun-Fat is clearly the star of both films, *Rich and Famous* unfolds with Lau and Man's characters being the main protagonists and cleverly weaves in Yun-Fat. The climax clearly leaves the viewer wanting more.

Tragic Hero picks up where R&F left off, with Ah-Chai heartbroken over the tragic consequences of his actions. Yung and Kwok are estranged and on opposing sides of the law. But in true gangster genre fashion, all three men will be reunited, for better or for worse. The final shootout has Ah-Chai going to Yung's compound and exacting revenge. This bullet fest rivals the best of John Woo's material. In the end, the heart and compassion of Ah-Chai's character becomes both his downfall and redemption.

RATING: ★ ★ ★ ★

—Alex Luu

**THE LEGEND OF THE 7 GOLDEN VAMPIRES**

Anchor Bay Video

Once again Anchor Bay Video rescues a rare film from obscurity. A co-production between Hammer Films and Hong Kong's legendary Shaw Brothers, *The Legend Of The 7 Golden Vampires* is truly a bizarre mix of vampire horror with over-to-the-top kung fu action. Released in 1974, the movie stars Hammer's regular player Peter Cushing and one of Shaw Brothers' brightest stars David Chiang. Like most other Hammer vampire titles, Cushing plays the legendary Professor Van Helsing on his quest to rid Count Dracula (John Forbes-Robinson) once and for all. Instead of London, the film takes place in the remote village of Ping Kuei in China, thus introducing the Chinese half of the cast. Chiang plays Hsi Ching, whom when upon learning of the existence of Dracula, joins forces with Van Helsing. The film is definitely uneven; most of the time you wonder whether this is a straight vampire flick or an all out kung fu action. Still, there is guilty pleasure to be had when two of the most popular genres—kung fu and vampire—merge into one movie. You gotta give credit to Hammer and Shaw Brothers for their attempt to meld the two genres into a cohesive piece.

The mix makes for a rollercoaster ride of genuine creepiness and some outstanding fight scenes. Interestingly, the DVD includes widescreen versions of Hammer's original uncut version, which runs at 89 minutes and the original 1974 American theatrical release that clocked in at 75.

RATING: ★ ★ ★

—Alex Luu



Fall/Winter 2000

AN EMPIRE OF WOMEN

By Karen Shepard
G.P. Putnam's Sons
263 Pages

Artists always run the (often-unavoidable) risk of selling someone out for artistic and commercial gain, and, if unlucky, face the real-life consequences later. William Randolph Hearst did not take kindly to being the focus of and character model for Orson Welles' ingenious first screenplay.

Hearst fought back ferociously, using his power to stymie *Citizen Kane's* success with the press, and subsequently, at the box office.

What if you were the one-time pre-pubescent model and centerpiece for a wildly successful erotically charged series of coffee-table photography books? Sort of like an Asian Brooke Shields at age 12. And what if the photographer was your grandmother? The subsequent fallout may not be as dramatic as the Hearst/Welles clash, but the psycho-

logical battlefield would be a fascinating landscape. Shepard's first novel unfolds in a rural cabin in Virginia where Celine Arnoux, a French-Chinese photographer

whom once published three photo-essay books, using her young granddaughter as the subject during six-year intervals of her life, reunites with her fragmented family. Now 75, Celine is coming to terms with her creations and their repercussions. The granddaughter, Cameron, is now a 25-year-old, ineffectual,

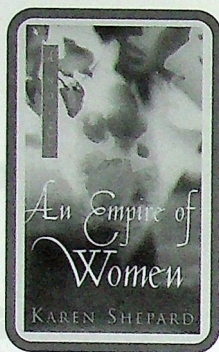
passive-aggressive artist, with a blood mix of Japanese, Chinese and French and in possession of a "cariage and poise (that) inspired envy." In between the two is Cameron's mother, Sumin, who suffers from the equivalent of middle-child syndrome. She is neither beautiful like her 25-year old daughter, nor remotely successful like her mother, Celine, who is not shy about reminding Sumin of her shortcomings. It is no wonder that Sumin is petty, frustrated, plotting

and selfish. The reunion is orchestrated by Photo Journal magazine, hoping to feature the family as a feature story. Following the three women into the countryside are two outsiders, the lone male magazine writer and a six-year-old girl, Alice, left behind in America by her Chinese mother.

Halfway through the novel, doubts about whether any of the main characters have any redeeming qualities are dispelled by Shepard's carefully constructed plot surprises, and use of irony. Shepard, at times, focuses so intently on small material details she seems to come from the Martha Stewart school of character development. Laundry lists of the character's favorite knick-knacks appear to be shorthand for character development.

As a storyteller, Shepard succeeds when she depicts a family history closely tied to the Chinese Cultural Revolution, and parallels the tragedy with the present day emotional skirmishes in the Virginia cabin. Ironically, and sadly, we learn that Celine's greatest talent may have inadvertently caused by the family's greatest tragedy.

—Mark Yoshiyama

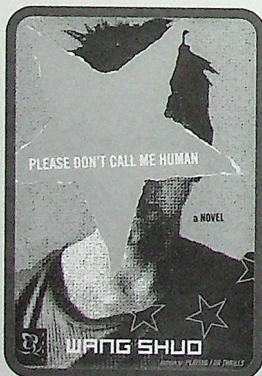


PLEASE DON'T CALL ME HUMAN

By Wang Shuo
Hyperion East
289 pages

For the Chinese, individually and collectively, a loss of face is to be avoided at all costs. And saving face is one of the engines that drive Chinese society. So begins the translator's note in Wang Shuo's latest novel, *Please Don't Call Me Human*. Shuo, whom Stephen King calls Raymond Chandler crossed with Bruce Lee, then proceeds to turn modern China on its collective head with a seething, satirical novel that imagines an Olympics where nations compete not on the basis of athletic prowess, but on their citizens' endurance of humiliation.

Shuo's world is a flying circus of inept govern-



ment officials who are in search of a golden boy, called the 3 Big Dream Boxer, to represent China in her quest for the gold medal. Inspired by China's humiliation over the awarding of the 2000 Summer Olympics to Sydney, *Please Don't Call Me Human* is an irreverent, sardonic look at China's quest for respectability on the world stage, while mired in its self-destructive past. Given Shuo's reputation as China's hippest, and probably most banned novelist, it's no wonder the novel features the underbelly of Chinese society—slackers and cons—along with the

government yes-men who run amuck like the embarrassed officials who ran for cover once the selection of Sydney was announced on international television.

—Mark Yoshiyama

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Fall/Winter 2000

toyreviews

NAM HO CHI MINH TRAIL VIET CONG SCOUT "LINH"

Dragon Models Ltd.

Holy Mo' Lee, I never thought I would see this one on the shelf, but there she is: "Linh", Viet Cong scout by Dragon Models Ltd. This unique figure is a must-have for military collectors. "Linh" represents what may be one of the first formidable female soldiers to ever stand up against the US Military in the history of warfare. Easy to blend into the countryside and amongst the populace, these soldiers created havoc throughout the southern countryside with deft and precision.

True to form, "Linh" is dressed in traditional black "pajamas", straw hat, paddy stompers and the iconic blue tartan kerchief. She comes armed with the classic



US M1 Carbine mostly used by officers during WWII and most likely a remnant from the Indo-Chinese War.

More than likely, the combination of gear on "Linh"—which includes two Chinese grenades, a Japanese canteen, knapsack and web belt—represents the many facets of her nations history.

As for "Linh" the figurine, Dragon has incorporated all the action figurine parts that they're best known for—moveable everything and a nicely designed face to match. It's nice that Dragon has incorporated aesthetic features to "Linh" like long legs, nicely braided hair, western facial features and more anatomically correct breasts than today's Barbie. All in all, "Linh" is a piece of history that any militarist would want to have for his or her collection.

RATING: ★★★★★

—Stanley Lim

KOREAN WAR PUSAN 1950 USMC SNIPER "JACK"

Dragon Ltd.

Was it a war or was it a conflict?

Some historians differ in the way in which the Korean War was recorded, but for New Generation, USMC Sniper "Jack" is true to form. As a sniper, he comes equipped with a .308 M1 Garand rifle modified with a high powered scope and muzzle guard. The elastic strap, leather cheek support and five top loading clips are as fun to play with as the figure itself.

The outer camouflage fabric—better known as "Duck Hunter"—covers the outer shell and the two piece helmet is held together by the elastic neck strap and a leather hold down strap. Take these two off and the inner shell removes itself. Take the fabric off and you've got a wash basin, cooking pot, or a short hand shovel.



His other accessories include two pineapple fragment grenades, canteens which hook on to the M1923 cartridge belt, a couple of spongy bags to support his body on and dog tags that actually have personal information printed on them.

Posing "Jack" is not a problem. His ratchet joints and smooth bending knees are actually very flexible. Sitting, standing, or lying prone is not a problem even with the long rifle in his hands. Like all DRAGON figures, "Jack" comes with a stand plate, and if you look closely to that side of

the package you'll find in a small plastic bag, two smokes and a zippo lighter.

Overall, I really liked "Jack" and all his accompaniments. He really fits the profile of the GI's who fought throughout the Korean countryside.

RATING: ★★★★★

—Stanley Lim

NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY REGULAR

21st Century Toys

The 12" action figure market has certainly changed since my youth when GI Joe was about all we had to play with.

The NVA regular from U.S. Tank Commander is unique in that he comes equipped with all the goodies that kept him alive in the jungles of South East Asia. You'll find the shoulder-slung water canteen, a classic safari hat, a Chinese AK-47, a machete for cutting foliage, and a shovel for burrowing underground bunkers. There are other additional pieces that make this set complete, but what really makes this figure fly off the shelf is the macho character that Ultimate Soldier created for this theme.



A ripped chest and a seriously stern face make you believe this soldier is rock hard against all incumbents. Moving the head around is fun because these figures have a ball joint on the neckpiece so he can flex in many directions. Granted, if you sit him next to some of the other figures available today, he makes them look like pansies.

As for the presentation of the piece itself, the illustration is well detailed and similar to that of art indigenous to this culture. I would, however, like to have seen more text on the box describing the daily activities of this soldier. Also, the design inside prevents you from repackaging the figure once you've taken him out.

RATING: ★★★★★

—Stanley Lim

Look for more reviews of similar products on ToySyndicate.com



Fall/Winter 2000

yolkontour

Please be advised that the listings are subject to change without notice.

October 21-22, 2000

Houston's Annual
Asian American Festival
Hermann Park, Houston, TX
Glenda Joe (713) 861-8270
Murduck Reynolds (281) 438-6446

October 29, 2000

Import Showoff
Del Mar Fairgrounds,
San Diego, CA
Tel. (310) 782-0500
Fax (310) 782-2055

November 5, 2000

Jeanne Yanai's Holiday
Arts & Craft Show
Torrance Cultural Arts Center
Torrance, CA
Tel. (310) 329-8679

November 3-5, 2000

20th Annual Ia 'Oe E Ka la Hula
Festival
Kuma Hula Association
Alameda County Fairgrounds
Pleasanton, CA
Allennette Lum, Arts & Crafts
Coordinator
Tel. (808) 259-0088

November 17, 2000

Dharma School, Salt Lake City, UT
Tel. (801) 771-6845

November 17-19, 2000

US-Japan Expo 2000
LA Convention Center
Los Angeles, CA
US-Japan Network, Inc.
Tel. (310) 532-2000
Fax. (310) 532-2340

November 24-26, 2000

Islandwide X-mas Craft Expo
Blaisdell Center, Honolulu, HI
Caroline M. Infante (808) 623-4050

December 2, 2000

Hot Import Nights
Ft. Lauderdale, FL
Tel. (949) 376-6942
www.hotimportnights.com



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↑
59

laurentom*Continued from page 39***Hollywood is lacking available parts for Asians and other minorities?**

LT: Yes. To remedy that, people of color need to start writing more and getting their own stories out there. Our community needs to go out and be supportive. Asian Americans need to support the arts. My mom at Columbia College in Chicago encourages Asian American kids to get more involved in acting. There might be some people who will take offense that my con artist character in "DAG." But I think there is something wrong when an actor or actress can't play a part because it

might seem wrong. I'm doing this little spin of a Chinese accent that I modeled after my grandmother, because that's how she used to talk. She was the funniest person on the planet, and I just adored her. Some people may have some problems with it as far as being politically incorrect. Like why are you doing that, it's setting people back. And I'm like, 'urghhh, it's funny.' This is a comedy. I believe if it really offends you that much, you can turn the channel. But I do get a little bit frustrated because I feel like, I don't think there is anything wrong with someone who speaks with an accent. It would be different if the writing were like, "I'm going home to eat my dog."

If there were a line like that, I would definitely say something. But the writing is not like that, because my character is really smart and she's the smartest person in the room. I feel really relaxed working on this set. The atmosphere here is really great. Everyone is pulling for each other. David Alan Grier is very supportive of me. And he thought it should have been me [for the role] from the start. He's a very generous person. Delta Burke is also very nice to work with. She's very professional and talented.

YOLK: So you have no regrets becoming an actress?

LT: I really had no choice. I sucked in math and sciences. ☹

ongoldenmountain*Continued from page 27*

the U.S. by the time they were of marrying age.

- In 1923, Y.C. Hong of USC Law became the first Chinese American to practice law in California after he passes his bar exam. Hong went on to defend Chinese immigration and promote civil rights for Chinese Americans.

- After the United States forms an alliance with China in World War II, Roosevelt signs the Magnuson Act, which allows Chinese immigrants to become naturalized citizens. The Exclusion Act was repealed in 1943.

It's not quite clear when Fong See arrived in the United States, but he employed Leticie in his own supplies shop during the gold rush and married her when she was 19. Because Fong See became a successful merchant, running the F. Suie One antique shop which boasted such patrons as Mae West, Edward Robinson, Frank Lloyd Wright and others, he lived a lifestyle that allowed for travel to China with the entire family and was able to return to the United States as one of the "professional Chinese immigrants" permitted to leave and regain entrance to the

country. (Merchants, diplomats, students and doctors were excepted from the Chinese Exclusion Act.) In spite of their apparently comfortable living, the motherland called See and his family to visit in 1919. He had wished for his sons to stay in China and develop the same successes they came to enjoy in the states on the Mainland, running Chinese hotels and factories, but Ticie, (perhaps wielding her innate white woman's pseudo-liberty of the times?), refused and returned with her children to the United States. All remained and began a flourishing furniture and Hollywood props business, building off the popularity of the Eastern furnishings of their father's antique store, which had drawn enough admiring patrons to sustain shops in various locale, including Long Beach, Ocean Park and Pasadena.

After browsing a glass display case paying tribute to Chinese politicians (March Fong Eu, former Secretary of State [Ca.], a former mayor of Monterey Park [creatively referred to in its own literature as the "Asian Beverly Hills"]), businessmen (Nautica founder David Chu, Yahoo's Jerry Yang), academics (AIDS researcher David Ho, Times Magazine's Man of the Year in 1996 and one Edgar Wong, project manager for a U.S. strategic

defense initiative) and local celebrities (Sam Chu Lin of Los Angeles' KTLA-TV; Michael Chang, winner of the French Open in 1987), I found my dad at the end of the exhibit, silenced by Visual Communications-esque Asian American film work and other introspective Asian American documentaries. Seeing him seated and engrossed, ironically beneath a poster advertising Chan's *Shanghai Noon*, I wondered if he had his own thoughts about leaving Gold Mountain. I also wondered what he thought of our generation's often intimately focused films.

"Pretty good," Dad said. "They even have Chinese kids' movies—I didn't know they would have that." I smiled and pointed out the 'Chinese kids' magazine,' our own YOLK, situated beside Michelle Kwan's skating costume and Garrett Wang's *Star Trek* action figure. "Yeah, they even have their magazines," I answered.

On Gold Mountain: A Chinese American Experience runs from July 23, 2000-January 1, 2001 at the Autry Museum of Western Heritage, 4700 Western Heritage Way, Los Angeles, CA 90027. (323) 667-2000 fax: (323) 660-5721. Email: www.autry-museum.org ☹



Fall/Winter 2000

theartofwar

World Premiere, Hollywood

peekaboo



(L-R): Cary Hiroyuki-Tagawa, Marie Matiko, Wesley Snipes



Michael Biehn



Fresh Prince of Bel Air's James Avery



NYPD Blue's Sharon Lawrence



Marie Matiko



Sinbad



Cary Hiroyuki-Tagawa

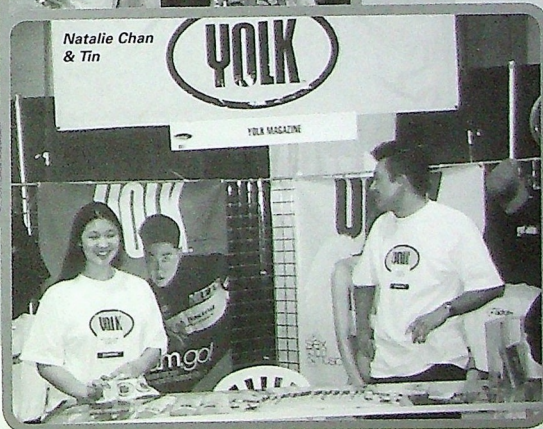
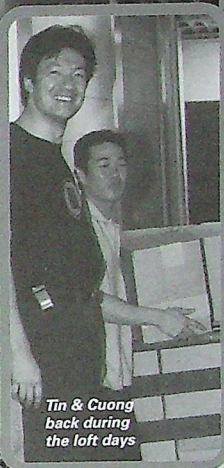
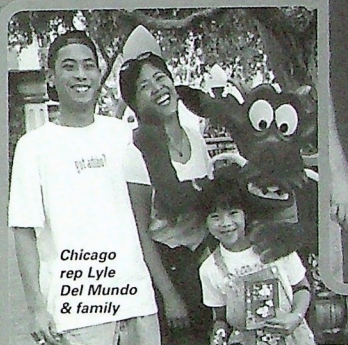
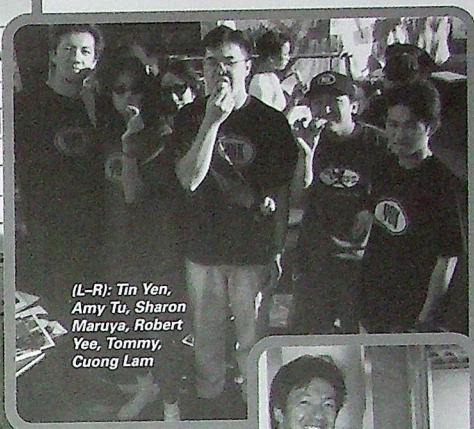
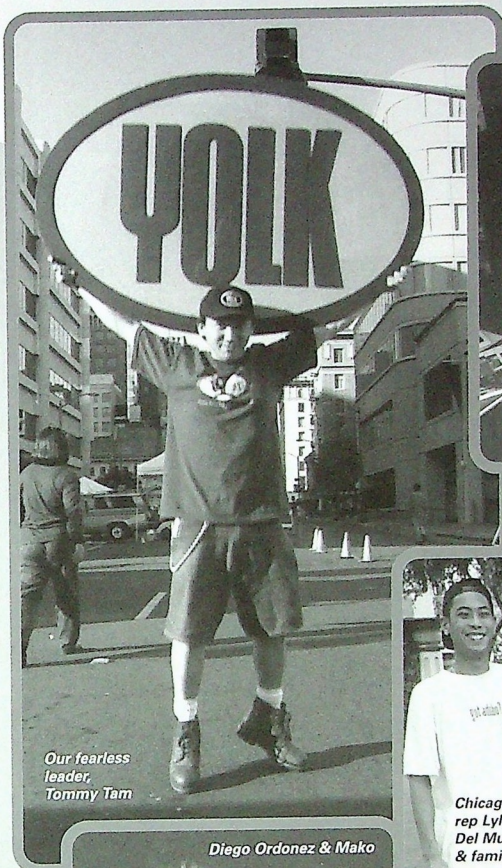


Fall/Winter 2000

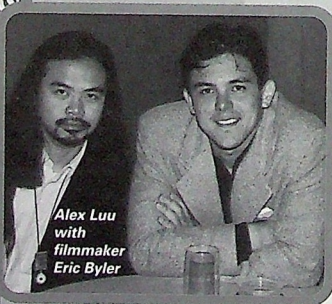
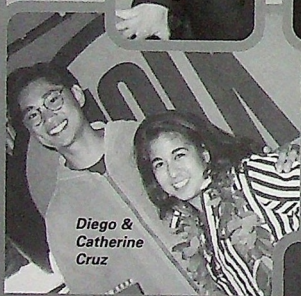
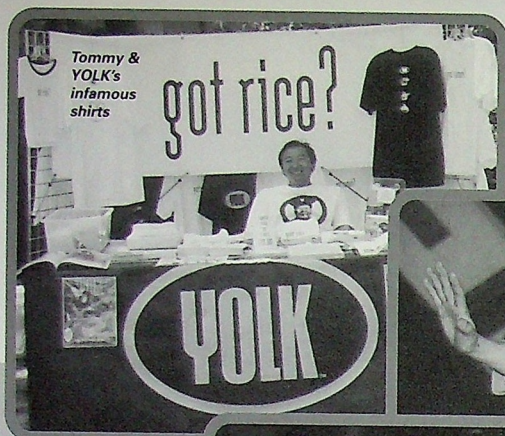
Photography: Diego Odoniz

specialthankyou to yolksterspastandpresent

As 2001 approaches, the YOLK staff would like to give a special thanks and recognition to the many faces that have contributed to the success of YOLK Magazine since its inception in 1994. Here's to many more years of success, growth, and evolution!



Specialthankyou



Fall/Winter 2000

AKEMI

WHY WERE THE BIOSYNTEK POLICE AFTER YOU?

AS YOU SURMISED, WE EXIST OUTSIDE KNOWN SOCIETY. WE CANNOT RELEASE YOU.

I WANT TO DISCOVER WHY THE POLICE CONSIDER YOU A LIABILITY.

I DON'T KNOW, BUT I RECOGNIZE YOU FROM THE TERRORIST ATTACKS EARLIER TODAY...

YOU ARE RESTRICTED TO CERTAIN AREAS OF THIS BASE ONLY.

YOU WILL BE TAGGED SO WE CAN KEEP AN EYE ON ALL YOUR WHEREABOUTS.

ANY SUSPICIOUS ACTS WILL RESULT IN YOUR UNTIMELY DEMISE. UNDERSTOOD?

YOU SEEM TO BE IN NEED OF AN ARM. THE DOCTOR WILL BE HAPPY TO PROVIDE YOU WITH A NEW ONE.

YES SIR.

THE GENERAL IS VERY GOOD AT READING PHYSIOGNOMIES. EVIDENTLY, YOURS IS AN HONEST ONE.

GOVERNMENT BIOSYNTEK VEHICLE WAREHOUSE.

THE MALFUNCTION IS FROM SOME ELECTROMAGNETIC DISRUPTER FIELD. THERE IS NO EXTENSIVE DAMAGE WE CAN'T FIX.

THIS IS SOME NEW DEVIANT TECHNOLOGY. THAT JARED HALIKS IS FAR TOO INNOVATIVE.

TO BE CONTINUED...

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